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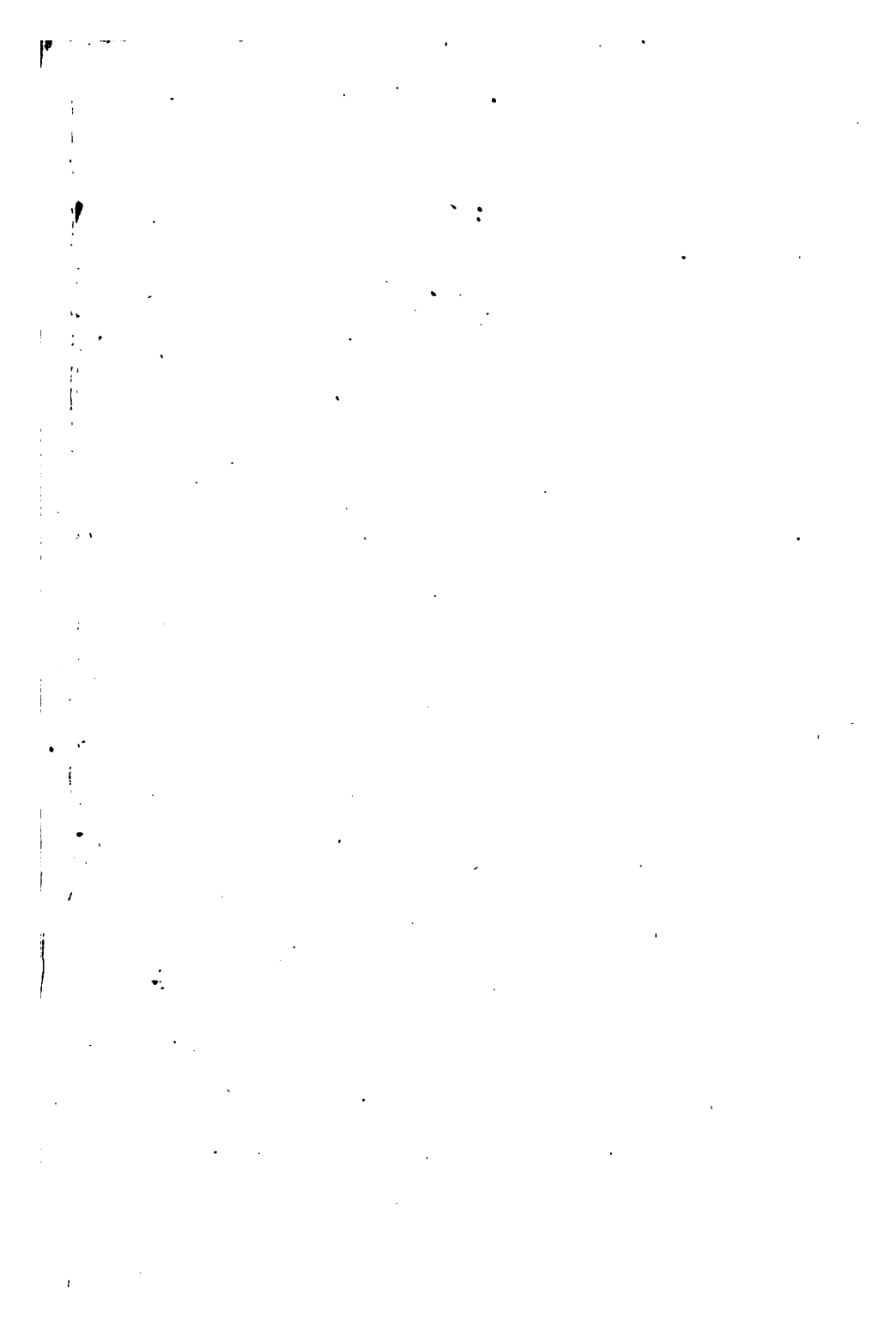
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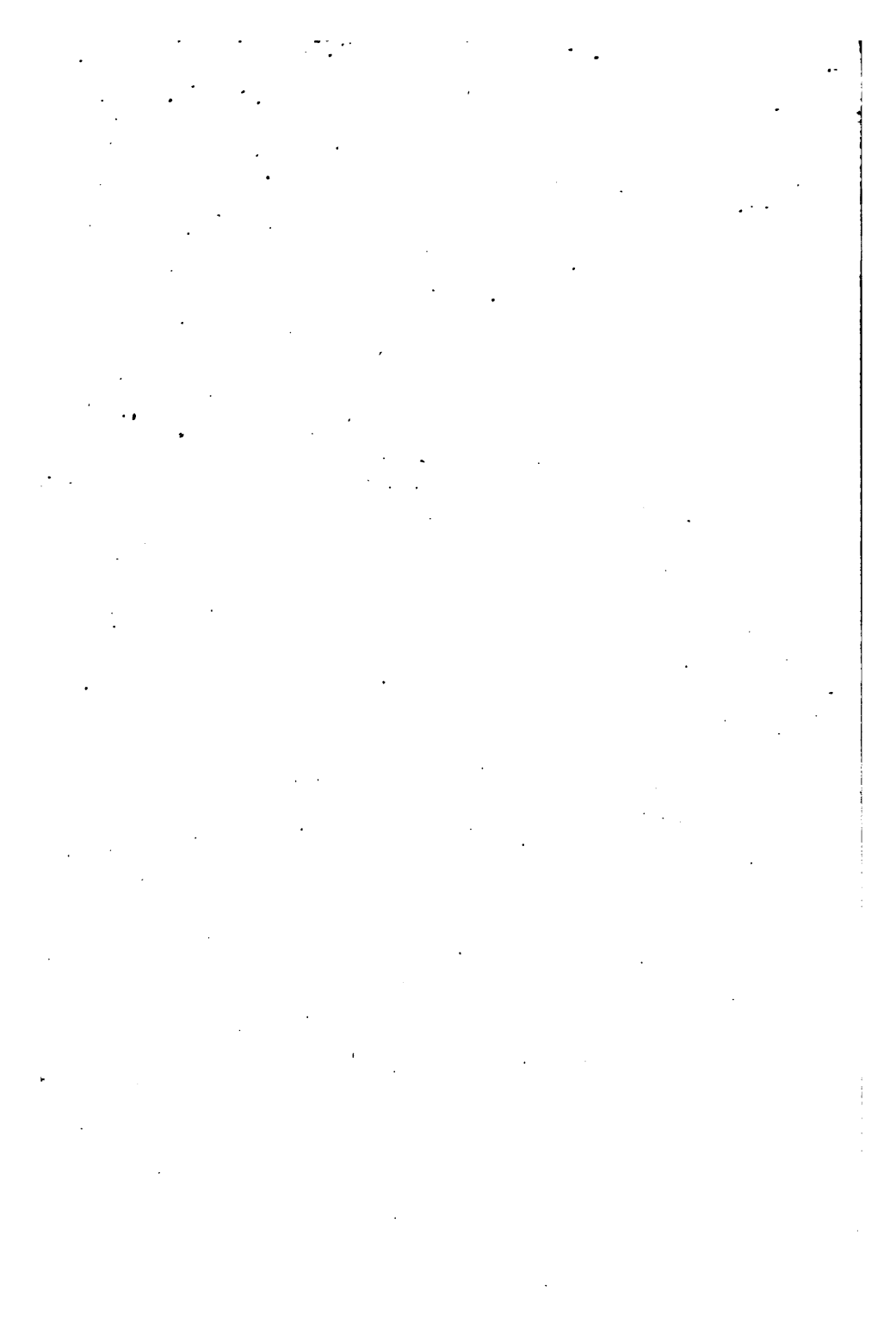
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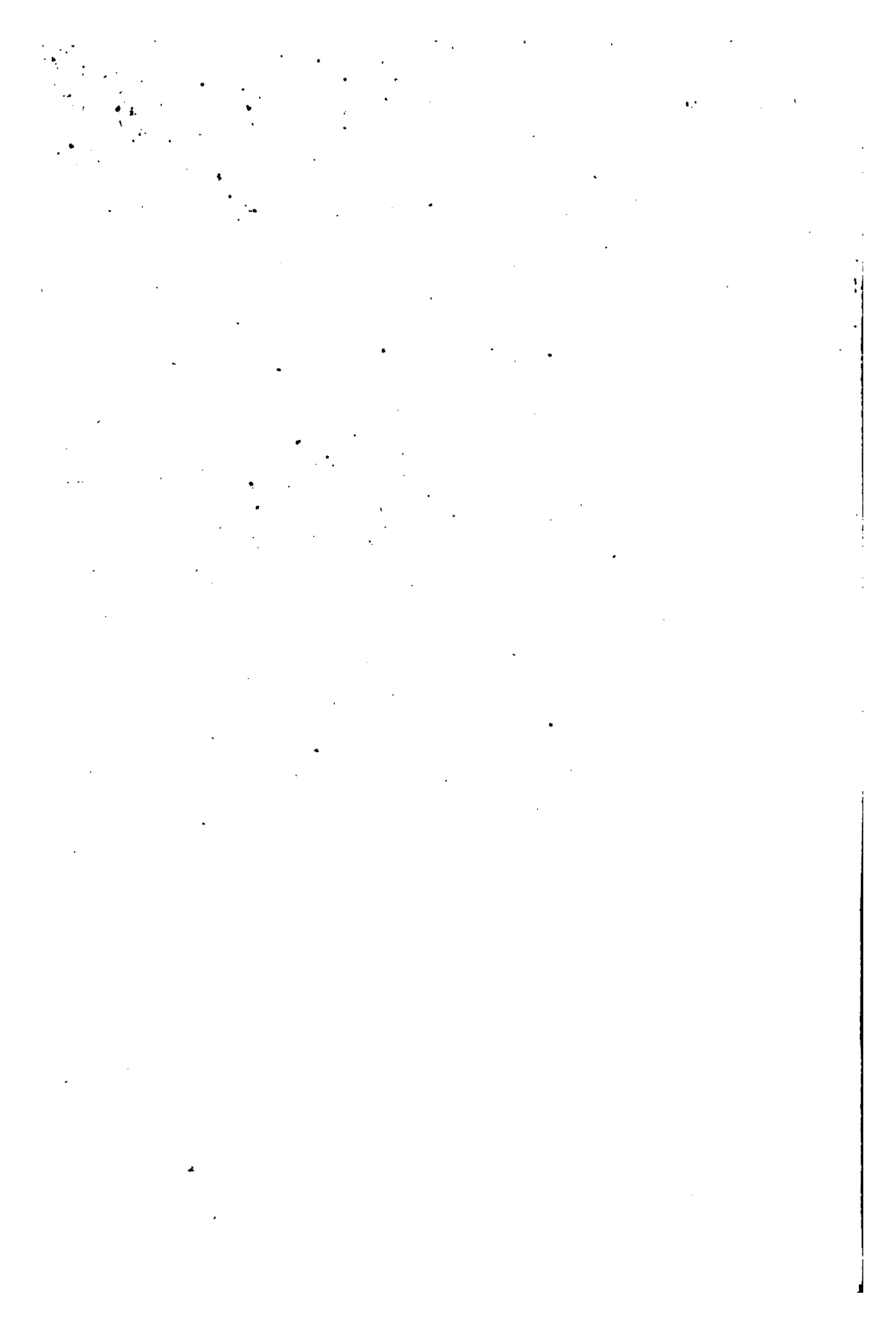
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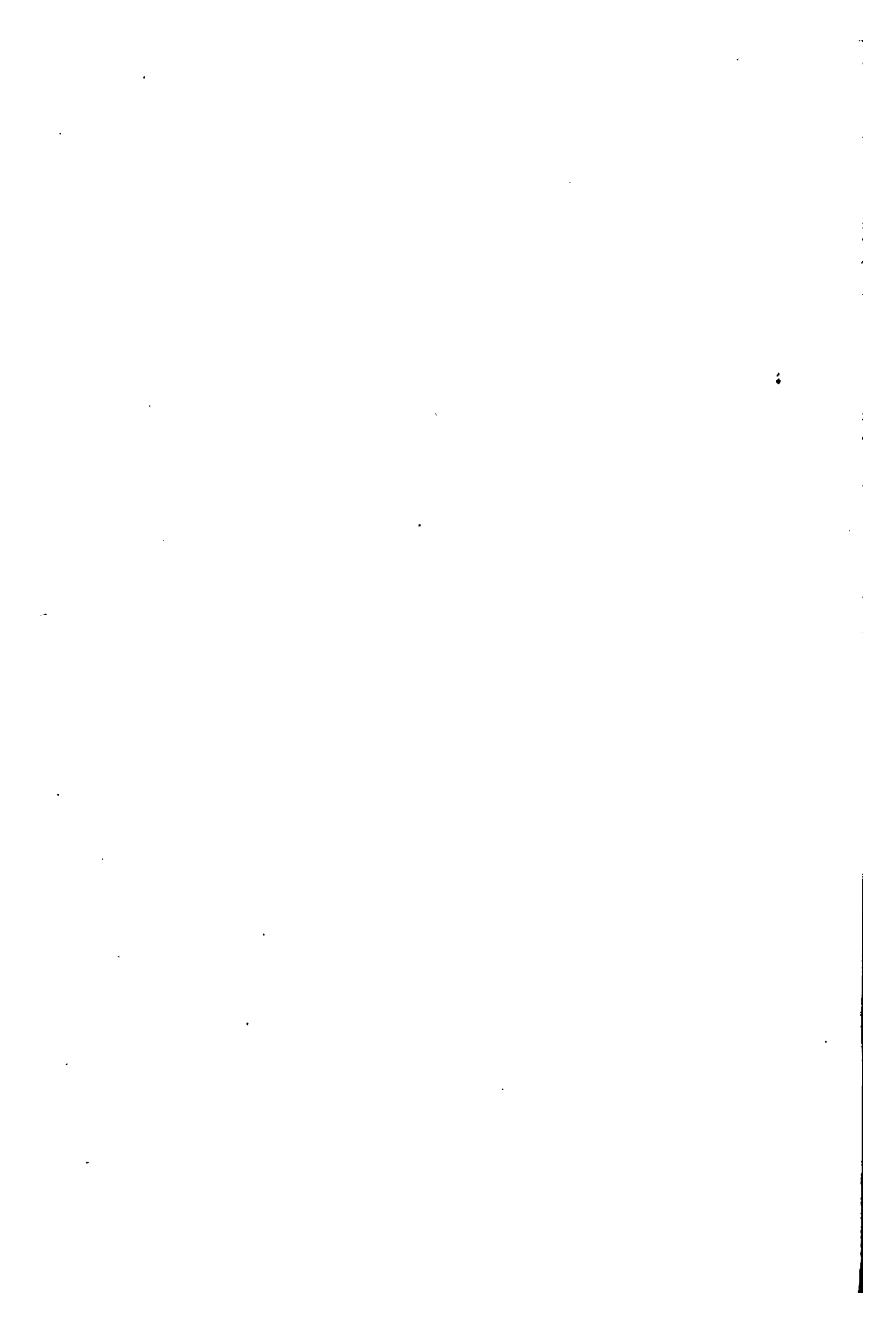
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A RETROSPECT AND OTHER
ARTICLES.



A RETROSPECT

AND OTHER ARTICLES

BY

MRS. RUSSELL BARRINGTON

AUTHOR OF "LENA'S PICTURE" AND "HELEN'S ORDEAL"

"The Good will prevail."—ÆSCHYLUS.

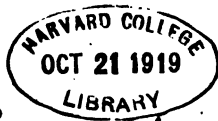
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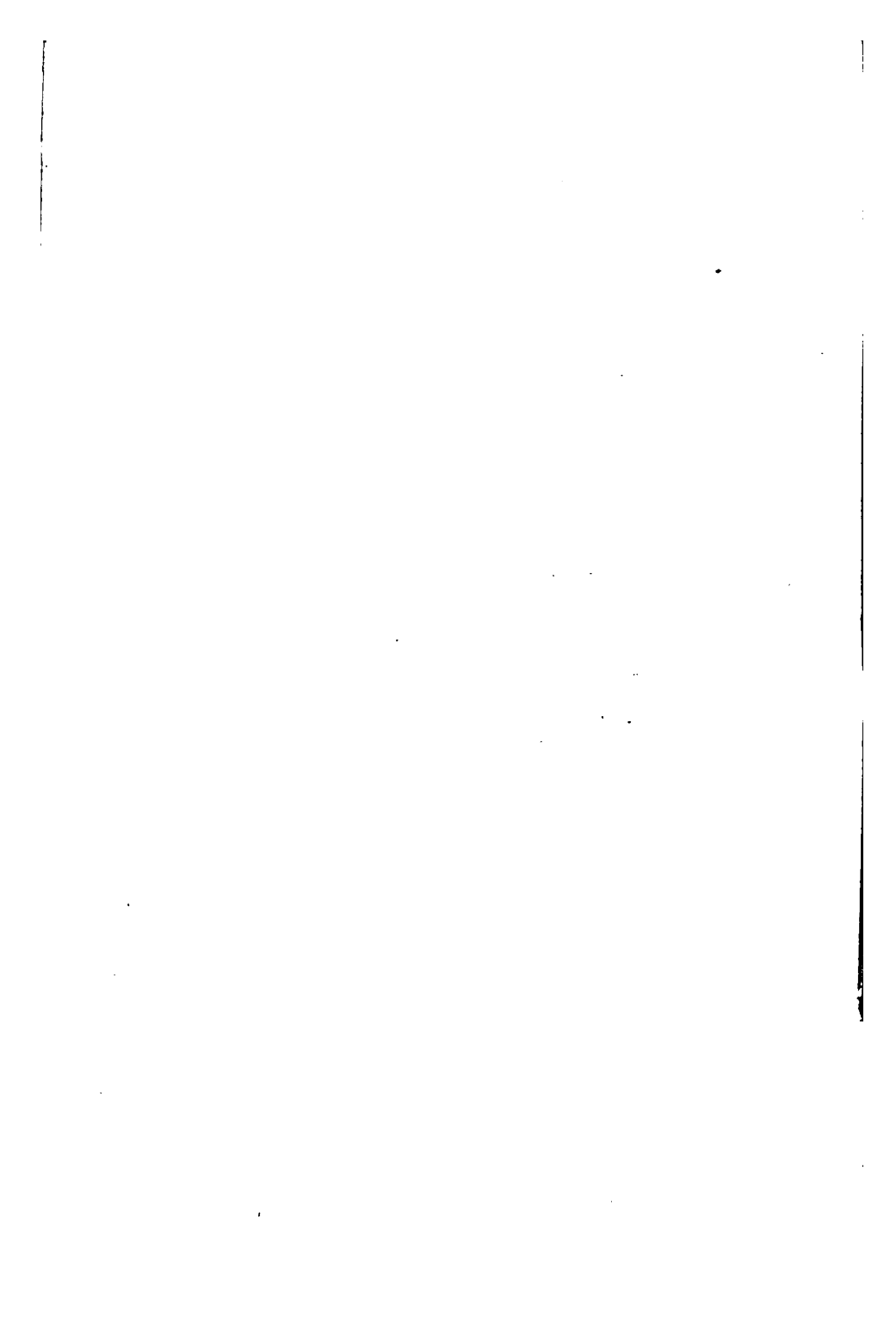


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TO THE MEMORY OF

WALTER PATER.



PREFACE.

HAVING been asked to reprint in a collected form these few articles written from time to time during the last seventeen years, I have done so, fearing however that the result may prove somewhat monotonous. With an ardent faith in the worth of beauty, in her value as an inspiring and healing power, I yet feel that unless her virtues, spiritual, intellectual, and physical, be scaled in their relative importance, such power can be neither fully developed nor entirely healthy. An endeavour to define the signs of such a right proportioning, and to enforce the necessity of it, has been the object and reason for all I have ever written. The ever-recurring motive has, I am afraid, led to repetition ; still, as I have had no reason in the main to alter any views originally expressed in these articles, I think it as well to reprint them, with very few and slight alterations, as they appeared in the "Nineteenth Century," "Fortnightly Review," "Spectator," "Weekly Register," "Good Words," and "English Illustrated Magazine." To these are added "The Reality of the Spiritual Life," originally published in pamphlet form by Mr. David Douglas, of Edinburgh, in 1889, and the description of

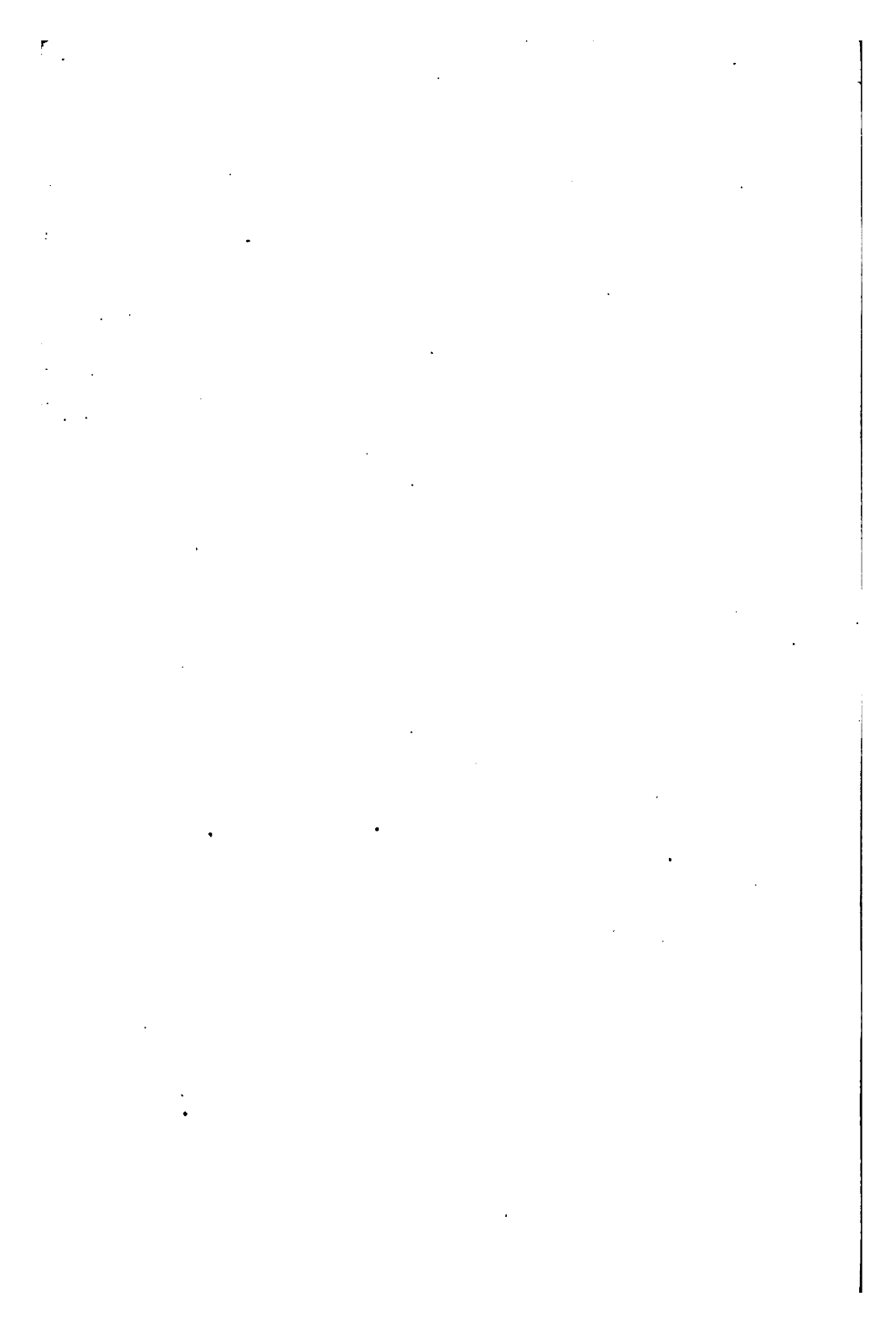
Mr. Watts's "Ideas, Methods, and Pictures," from the Illustrated Catalogue of paintings exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1885. These descriptions expressed at the time they were written, Mr. Watts's own views, the manuscripts and proofs having been revised by him. For this reason they are reprinted at the end of the article on his work written for the "Nineteenth Century." "A Retrospect," which has not before been published, was written in December, 1895, and treats of the great art which has been produced in England during the Victorian era, and of the present art aspect of to-day.

EMILIE ISABEL BARRINGTON.

MELBURY HOUSE,
February, 1896.

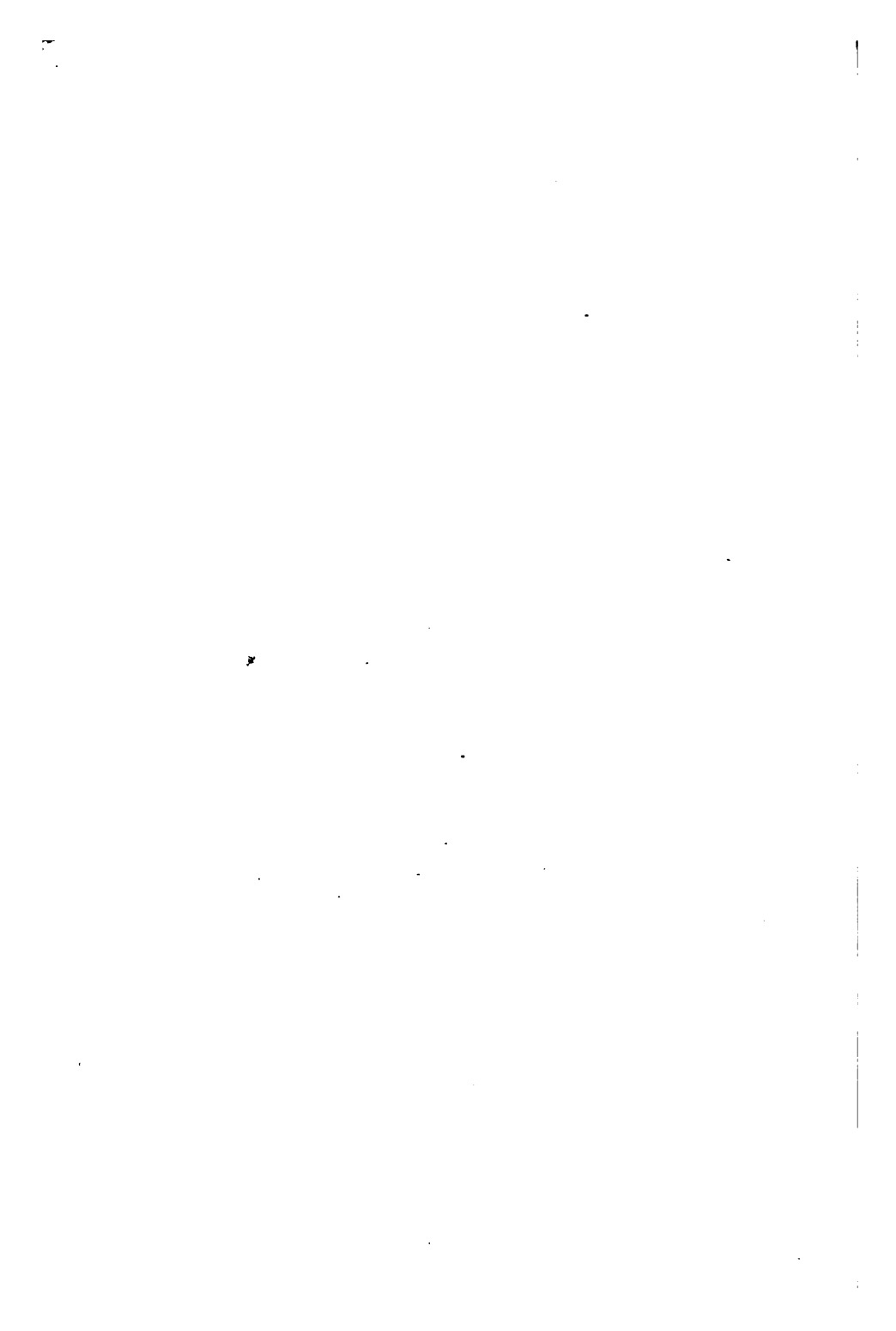
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A RETROSPECT.

B



A RETROSPECT.

Speaking of Eugénie and Maurice de Guérin, Matthew Arnold says : " She was very different from her brother ; but she too, like him, had that in her which preserves a reputation. Her soul has the same characteristic quality as his talent,—*distinction*. Of this quality the world is impatient, it chafes against it, rails at it, insults it, hates it ; it ends by receiving its influence, and by undergoing its law. This quality at last inexorably corrects the world's blunders and fixes the world's ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet."

IT is difficult for some of us who have lived in the world half a century and have been educated in our youth on other lines in art, to feel much sympathy in the general directions which art and literature have taken among the younger painters and writers of the rising generation :—such directions being so entirely different, it might even be said, opposed to those which kindled our own youthful enthusiasm.

A reaction has taken place since the " Pre-Raphaelites " created a Renaissance in art matters. The pendulum of fashion is swinging in a contrary direction ; and, doubtless, those no longer young possess no longer the youthful pliability which would enable them to turn and swing back with it. It is well, therefore, that tolerance should mellow the rust which with years gradually gathers on the keenest sensibilities

and tends to that eventual stagnation in the perceptive faculties of eye and brain when new departures cease to have any meaning for us. While a keen interest is still retained in all that concerns art, in all humility, let it be remembered, by those who are aging, that the weak points in such a reaction, and not the stronger, are likely to be most salient. While keeping in view this necessity of diffidence in judging the work of those who, with all the vitality of youth, have adopted principles almost the reverse of those which inspired the art of our youth, surely it may yet be questioned whether the taste which favours this reaction is not a strangely perverted one? "*Après l'invention du blé ils voulaient encore vivre du gland.*" After our modern English art and literature have comprised the widest horizon and the highest zeniths in thought and feeling, we are now confronted by a school of painting which, on principle, demands that no idea should be conveyed to us by their paintings, but the art of painting, and the cleverness of the painter; an art, moreover, confined to the transcript of the impression of things as they strike the eye with a fleeting vaporous quality of uncertainty.

Surely this is acorns, and not wheat? A retrogradation, not an advance? And we of the old-fashioned mould ask what can have caused this return to the more savage food? Two causes may be cited as the most prominent.

There are many conditions in our modern civilization which obliterate the paramount necessity of the quality of distinction in the standard, and therefore in the living of life, an obliteration of distinction in our moral as well as in our mental conditions; secondly, as consequent on this first cause, the character of our art

and literature has ceased to be purely English, owing to strong influences from the French nation ; in art also from the Japanese. These last produced exquisite decorative work in the eighteenth century, the delight of all who possess true art instincts, but the manner of which it is a futile affectation for the English to copy, arising as it does from associations, manners, ideas, and culture, completely differing from our own.

In all ages we English seem to have a peculiar aptitude for being deluded by a superfluity of admiration for all things foreign. Perhaps this is due to the effect of our climate which tends to physical depression. We have but to cross the Channel and our spirits rise. The lightness of the air is exhilarating, and everything foreign is toned to us by such exhilaration. Still, in all cases where truly great art has been achieved, we find in it distinctly prominent the existence of a national character and national preferences. How can it be otherwise? It is in our earliest childhood, long before we can annex any foreign culture, that we feel in the germs of our art instincts a response to the nature around us ; that we find out our own preferences among those things ; that we first feel an excitement in viewing certain colours and forms, and that we weave forms of our own out of the aspects of the things about us. It is long before anyone knows that the child has a talent for drawing that the store of impressions has begun to be gathered in, which will influence its preferences through life. Take, for instance, our power of feeling what is called music in the sounds we hear. We are accustomed to associate certain schemes and arrangements of sound with a pleasurable sensation, but to other nations such ar-

rangements of sound have no meaning whatever as music. A troop of Javanese musicians was performing some years ago at the Aquarium, the operas which date back to an earlier time than any other known operas. The music, as music, meant absolutely nothing to our ears, a queer noise and nothing more, while we were assured by the showman of the troop, that the music which was being played on the organ after his performance was finished,—it was Sullivan's "Lost Chord,"—was equally incomprehensible as music to the Javanese. In either case, the necessary links of association were wanting.

We are complex, intricate creatures ; our thoughts and senses are enveloped from birth to death in clouds of associations : associations which we unconsciously acquire and to which we as unconsciously revert. Nevertheless, it is these unconscious links with past impressions which help to feed our moments of highest joy and of most tragic sorrow. We may trace such sources of melancholy or of joyous feeling when they are attached to the influence of some personality which has had a keen power of making itself felt in the living of our lives ; or again, when attached to any place in which we have lived while we were possessed by strong emotions, especially when attached to the home of our earliest years where we first awakened to life with the vivid interest which a sense of ever present novelty gives in childhood to everything in the world ; or again, to any scene hallowed by the sense that therein was found a shrine for our industry, therein was wrought a form for our most cherished ideas and aspirations.

" Ah ! where the spirit its highest life hath led,
All spots, match'd with that spot, are less divine."

Such obvious associations may be realized and recalled through the strength of the feelings attached to them ; but the living of each day, and of each minute of each day, is affected by a multiplicity of impressions on the senses, and on the mind, all of which are but the action of the present drawing on the stores amassed by the associations of the past. Those are for the most part felt without being traced, and our tastes are formed by influences which have affected us with no theory of any conscious preferences of our own being attached to them. Out of these unacknowledged forces creeps from the nature of those who have in them the stuff wherefrom real art or poetry is created—what are called original conceptions. From these accumulated impressions is developed the subtler, because the more intimate, relation between the personality of the poet or artist and the subject of his theme, which culminates in a form of expression long after the foundations have been laid in his earliest childhood. A keen perceptiveness and exceeding sensitiveness to all beauty seen by the eye are the first natural gifts bestowed on the born artist ; but when the art instinct is strong within a nature, every association has a certain influence on its development, and helps to mould the form in which the individuality of the artist expresses itself. Where the feelings are deep, and the intellect of a high order, such instincts create a form in which the heart and the brain naturally find an expression, and though, in proportion to the strength of the artistic power will always chiefly lie the value of art, as art,—the more abstract qualities of brain and heart will act as propelling forces to the instinctive gifts, giving consistency to the aims, and a power of industry and endurance in

carrying out and developing such aims into an expression in art. It is the depths in feeling and in thinking that propel to the greatest heights in art; and it is in an artist's own country, in the character of its society, of its morals, and of its culture, that will be found the soil in which his gifts will grow most freely and most healthily.

Mr. Hubert Parry says, in writing on Purcell: "However great the force and persistence of a poet's or artist's personal character, experience will prove in the end that he is not the mouthpiece of his poor isolated self alone, but of a wide circle of his fellow-men. The greater the genius, the wider the ultimate range of humanity whose response to his artistic call implies participation in the thoughts and emotions he formulates, though ordinary mortals have not the gift of language to express them. . . . In artistic regions it is easy to see what influences a man's surroundings and the sympathetic or hostile attitude of his fellow-men have upon the nature and style of his artistic work. It is a settled kind of control which those who have no gift of artistic utterance exercise over those who have."

An artist's own national surroundings inspire his most natural utterance even in the cases, where, from childhood, he has been trained in foreign schools, and we see complexities of inherited instincts giving signs of the native origin through the effects of alien culture.

In a paper Mr. Frederic Harrison wrote some years ago, on the eighteenth century, he enlarged on the fact that it was the eighteenth century that prepared for us our notable nineteenth century,—that it

was out of the earnest thought and strong right-minded feeling of the students, and of the philanthropists of the seventeen hundreds that the great Victorian era sprang with its brilliant galaxy of writers, poets, and artists. The higher taste of our public was founded in the solid layer of a high-toned intellectual morality produced by the influence of a previous generation.

When the combination of men of genius, great in various directions, is considered, no era in English history is perhaps so notable as the Victorian era. What a galaxy indeed of mighty planets has brightened our zenith during the last fifty years! Most, alas! have already sunk below our horizon, the rest, with but a few exceptions, are nearing it. To recall only those whose place cannot be questioned:—in science, we have Darwin, Wallace, Huxley, Tyndall; in poetry, —Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, Dante Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, Swinburne;—in history and prose, Grote, Ruskin, Carlisle, Matthew Arnold, Walter Bagehot, Walter Pater;—in fiction, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot; in art,—Turner, Dante Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Watts, Leighton, Millais, Holman Hunt, Frederick Walker; in decorative art,—William Morris and Walter Crane, and in the art of illustration, Cruikshank, John Leech, Du Maurier, Walter Crane, Caldecott, Charles Keene, and Linley Sambourne; besides how many whose place is only one step lower on the ladder of fame!

There may be other constellations arising; undeveloped poets, writers and artists, still young, whom the world has yet to discover, but assuredly, there is no group of great men nearing the prime of their powers

which can be compared to the great constellations which have set, or are setting, save in two arts, those of music and sculpture. In music more especially do we feel cheered by the sense of a hopeful spring. A renaissance in music truly English in feeling has asserted itself. In the "Invocation to Music" written by Dr. Hubert Parry with reference to the Purcell bi-centenary festival which took place this year, in the fine Miltonic verses of Dr. Bridges, he invokes the return of the Muse to our Isle, exiled as she has been for two centuries by the strength of foreign influences, and by our weakness in allowing the national character of our art to be destroyed by a foreign usurpation. A modern school of English music has, we may with reason hope, its brightest epoch yet to come. Though Wagner is so popular, and the giant Brahms still lives, and is still creating work which might justly influence any but the strongest national talent, still a renaissance in music, having distinctly an English character of its own, has asserted itself. What happened 200 years ago in the history of our English music seems in a like manner to be now taking place as regards our art of painting. Purcell died—the great Handel came, and our native English school of music existed no longer. Foreign influences were stronger than native gifts. Our great English artists of the Victorian era have passed or are passing away from us, and foreign influence is seducing the gifts which are too unpronounced and weak to find a legitimate language of their own wherein to express any national sentiment. But "*On exécute mal ce qu'on n'a pas conçu soi-même,*"—and assuredly we English seem to be singularly deficient in the power of assimilating. This want

of adapting happily the conceptions and manners of other nations adds to our strength when we are strong enough to be ourselves, but it is in this want that our weakness shows itself most when we allow ourselves to be overpowered by alien influences. The Americans, on the other hand, have a power of assimilating which gives to their assimilations a distinct value of their own. The root of the matter and manner may not be indigenous in their nation, but the dexterity they possess in fostering and developing the root into a fair growth of fruitfulness, is distinctly a national gift, and creates in their art and literature a school which, though derived from the French, they may justly claim as their own, though it cannot be called precisely an original school.

But what, indeed, is more difficult to describe convincingly than the meaning of the word "original" as regards a work or a school of art? Like beads in a rosary the history of art is linked together, the great schools and the great artists of those schools starting out prominently, but, like the large beads by the smaller, linked together by workers who, though less prominent, yet hold together the direction and the traditions of the art.

Perhaps the decisive proof of the existence of originality, or the want of it in any work of art, would lie in the answer to the question :—would it have been produced had not other works of art been previously produced in which existed the particular qualities for which it claims a distinct position? Is it a new departure in any feature of importance, or does it depend on the fact that a forerunner has shown the way? Has it something of its own to say which has never been

said before, and was that something the reason why it was created ?

In a hundred unimportant ways its form and manner may be a copy, or rather a result from a study of other art ; but if, from the artist's own individual experience of nature, he works out some effect which is his own, and his alone, and this is the guiding motive of his work, it deserves to be designated as original. On the other hand, though it may have improved on the work of the art which inspired the motive, there is nothing in its æsthetic meaning but what has been said before, it cannot deserve the epithet. Had the French artists and writers of the last and present generations not painted and written in the particular language in which they have, it is to be doubted whether the American School of Art, in the form in which it exists in the present day, would have been produced. It has arisen out of the culture and not out of the instincts of the people. Where the undoubted stamp of originality exists, not only shall we find that the national character and sentiment has been influential in moulding the directions of its art, but also that the current tide of events, and the fashions of society, will tone and colour the particular veins of thought and the manner in which the art is expressed. Still such passing fashion will not absorb completely the aims and the standard which the greatest men set before them. To quote from Mr. Walter Pater's essay on Winkelmann, "Individual genius works ever under conditions of time and place ; its products are coloured by the varying aspects of nature, and type of human form, and outward manners of life. There is thus an element of change in art ; criticism must never for a

moment forget that the artist is the child of his time. But besides these conditions of time and place, and independent of them, there is also an element of permanence, a standard of taste, which genius confesses. This standard is maintained in a purely intellectual tradition. It acts upon the artist, not as one of the influences of his own age, but through those artistic products of the previous generations which first excited, while they directed in a particular channel, his sense of beauty. The supreme artistic products of succeeding generations thus form a series of elevated points, taking each from each the reflection of a strange light, the source of which is in the atmosphere around and above them, but in a stage of society remote from ours."

All the art of the great painters of the Victorian era is marked by a sentiment which is distinctly English ; but much of it likewise by that element of permanence which concedes to a standard of taste which the genius of former times has established. It has been wisely said that "the greatest genius always gravitates towards the orthodox," and whatever extravagances and individual exaggerations may have been indulged in by the "Pre-Raphaelites" when they first fought for sincerity versus tradition, they have ended by confessing that element of "permanence" in their art. Besides the originality which may be developed by the more general influences which surround an artist, who is true to his own national instincts and feeling, there is yet a subtler, more personal kind of originality which is bred by individual feeling and preferences, a something which is intimately his own. In its most passionate forms it illumines certain works of art with a

light as of inspiration, and gives to all that possess it in any degree a quality of loveliness which is convincing. It matters little in what style of painting it is recorded, it wins us. It is in art what heart is in the whole character of a man or of a woman ;—a power which, asserting for itself no power, eventually reigns in its influence above all others ; it is, to quote again from Mr. Pater, “the impress of a personal quality, a profound expressiveness, what the French call *intimité*, by which is meant some subtler sense of originality, the seal on a man’s work of what is most inward and peculiar in his moods and manner of apprehension ; it is what we call expression carried to its highest intensity of degree. That characteristic is rare in poetry, rarer still in art, rarest of all in the abstract art of sculpture ; yet essentially, perhaps, it is the quality which alone makes work in imaginative order really worth having at all.”¹

One artist in our English school belonging to the Victorian era was but only half English, Dante Rossetti. He had so pronounced a personality, such great gifts

¹ Though as a school the Americans evince no national originality, in individual artists, we meet at times this subtler sense. There is a picture which, alas ! we English who have not crossed the Atlantic only know through photographs, Mr. Sargent’s portrait of the little girl “Beatrice,” which has in it very notably that quality of *intimité*, that subtler sense of originality which makes us love the thing. We know Beatrice, she is a person to us, her influence works a charm ; she is so very much herself, and that self is so bewitchingly winning. She is painted with the smeary touch belonging to the modern French method, but the manner cannot spoil the matter. The method may be French, but the beauty, the personal quality, the *intimité*, “the subtler sense of originality” in the picture is Mr. Sargent’s, and his alone.

both as a poet and as an artist, that, joining as he did the earliest painters of the pre-Raphaelite school, Madox Brown and Holman Hunt, who were both likewise his teachers, he infused into their principles a tinge of his Italian fervour—and that sense of realism in the realms of pure imagination traceable to the influence which Dante's writings had on himself. There is one picture however, perhaps his greatest, though it was never finished, called "Found," in which the Italian fervour runs into the modern English groove of moral questioning, in that quality recalling certain of the poems of our era, especially a poem written by Dante Rossetti himself, entitled "Jenny."

Another subject which is also distinctly English in its sentiment, and of which there are two treatments, one a painting, the other a very finished and beautiful pen and ink drawing, strikes even a higher note. Magdalen is breaking through the crowd of her companions in pleasure to reach her Saviour in the house of the Pharisee: "We needs must love the highest when we see it" might be the motto of the picture. The strength of the passion lit by inner spiritual yearnings shown in the countenance and attitude of Magdalen as she throws aside and bursts beyond the slighter influences of the smiling crowd of dancers and musicians, is as great a triumph in expressional art as has ever been created. The only other works perhaps worthy to be recalled as on the same level in that particular quality are those by Albert Dürer, notably the sketch of the Agony in the Garden, in his house at Nuremberg.

Again the Beata Beatrice is a work by Rossetti which denotes a strong English influence. The spiritual

trance in which Beata Beatrice is wrapped, in which there is at once such serenity and such rapture, suggests those inner things belonging to the spiritual life which are at once passionate in their intensity and veiled in their mystery. The exaltation is that of our Northern races impressed and made mute by the mystery and awe of spiritual revelation, not that of the Southern devotees who are more distinct and articulate in their religious fervour. As a rule, however, Rossetti's work is such a blending of Italian fire and of English strength, that, though we may justly claim him as one among the great men of the Victorian era, he but partially exemplifies the national distinctiveness.

Most English of the English is Sir John Millais' work, alike in the manner, matter, and sentiment; English also in that it does not evince qualities resulting from artistic culture in so pronounced a degree as those which appeal to our more general human sympathies. As the actual art in Shakespeare is obliterated by something which touches us as greater than art, so when Sir John Millais is at his greatest we admire something in his pictures which touches our English sensibilities in a fuller, more human way than could any art in which we felt that culture was more evident. A joyous vital energy suggesting the sense of all that is bracing and invigorating to mind and body alike, as are the fresh breezy waves playing around and washing the shores of our Island, a healthy spontaneous sincerity which has won for us the reputation of being the most truthful of nations, these are the characteristics in the English character to which his art responds. The

kind of pathos which refines this happy strength is as deep and true and tender in Sir John Millais' work as are the vigour and the power. Never was there a better example of this refinement of sentiment in his work than in the very original treatment of the death of Saint Stephen, exhibited in the Academy Exhibition of 1895. In none of the countless paintings of martyrs to be found in the galleries and churches all over Italy could be seen a more touching holiness of expression than in the face of this youthful Saint; never has the joy of the spirit, triumphing with a childlike grace of unconsciousness over the martyrdom of the body, been more subtly portrayed. And the pathos in it is all the more lovable for being, it would seem, only felt—not thought out by the artist; the story simply told from the heart. The gift we call genius is possessed in a paramount degree by this great painter; the power of almost unconsciously doing great things which, though sometimes slandered by those who belong to the school of the *Précieux* as Philistinisms in art, have yet a great power to excite genuine interest and sympathy in the big world beyond this special sect of artists. It is the marvellous power of painting with ease expressions which have in them a whole world of feeling, as in this picture of "Saint Stephen," the "Effie Dene," the old sailor's head in "the North-West Passage," and other of his works, which appeal to all alike, be they artists or those who know nothing of art, but who know enough of life to recognize how genuine, how subtly true is the sentiment. Among the number of pictures possessing great qualities which Sir John Millais has painted, a few stand prominently above the rest through their

possessing in a more remarkable degree the quality which is, perhaps, the noblest quality which painting, as painting, can possess, namely solemnity ; the burning, intense solemnity of colour which recalls the great painted poems of Giorgione. "The Knight crossing the ford," "The Nuns digging their graves:" these are works which even the great Venetians hardly surpass in their strangely impressive depth and fulness of solemn colour.

In Mr. Holman Hunt's painting the qualities of artistic culture are, as in the works of Sir John Millais, less distinctly prominent than those which interest the mind and feelings, though in the "Light of the World," often cited as the greatest picture of modern days, there is artistic beauty of the highest quality, as well as those qualities which have won for it the very high place among works of art which is given it. Though very different from that of Sir John Millais, the sentiment in Mr. Holman Hunt's art is equally entirely English. Perhaps it may be said that a deeper, more religious sense inspires it—not, perhaps, so much the religious sentiment of to-day, but that of a time when religion entered into the world's doings in a *naïve* and unquestioning manner ; before the battle of the Reformation, before the saddening element of strife and dissension in the Church separated the interests of Christianity into two camps ; when ingenuity was employed quaintly and simply to express in realistic art the mystic visions of faith ; when an analogous feeling was put into the words and music of the old English carols, "King Wenneslas," etc. English also is Mr. Holman Hunt's strong power of a self-centred isolation aiding his individual powers

of imaginative creation. The originality of his art is beyond all question, and he has pre-eminently proved the sincerity of his early convictions by his staunch, consistent allegiance to them.

In Sir Edward Burne-Jones's work are found exquisite artistic triumphs recalling certain beauties in the poems of Spenser ;—rich fancy, loveliness and grace, and a wealth of Nature's detail ; but all seen through a veil of sadness—sadness produced, perhaps, by the fact that the beauty of such a fairyland perfection is not possible in the lives of human beings living in this nineteenth century. The sentiment in all his work is that of a tender grace saddened, it would seem, by the feeling that men and women cannot be as lovely or as natural as the beauty of the world would seem to mean that they should be—that they cannot grow as happily as flowers—cannot live and love without losing much of the happiness that nature meant them to have. The beauty in Sir Edward Burne-Jones's art belongs to a romantic age—or rather, perhaps, to a fairyland region behind history, but the sadness of the passion belongs to our England of to-day. For in this great work passion there undoubtedly is, though veiled by a reserve—an awe—a holding of the breath,—a sense of mystery ; it is the passion that pales the cheek and stills the pulses,—too fine and delicate for explicit utterance in so coarse a world as that in which most men live ; the quality of feeling which shrinks from any touch with that vulgar reign of materialism which has so strong a rule over our modern life. The recent exhibition of the collected works of Sir Edward Burne-Jones must still be so vividly held in the minds of

all who can, in any degree, sympathize with such great art treasures, that it would be superfluous to remind the reader of any special work in the collection, the more so as one and all have the quality of consummate completeness, the definite stamp of a truly great master.

In the paintings which are now perhaps considered as most characteristic of Mr. Watts's genius, the sentiment is that which emanates from doubt ; from the sense of solemn mystery reigning over all else in the world, a sentiment which is in part English as Tennyson, Browning, and Matthew Arnold are English, but yet not possessing that note of hope which is the ultimate expression in the song of these poets, a hope which has in its sound a distinctly national English ring. The question, the mystery, the puzzles in life and in the higher region of thought Mr. Watts paints in noble texture, line, and colour, but no triumph of faith has he ever fully conceived. As in "*Parsifal*" Wagner gives a full dramatic truth in the first and second acts, but when the crown is due, when we feel that the clear sky should open and we should be filled with a sense of serene joy and triumph, a distinct joy, however much restrained and chastened by holy awe, there is but the *Gut Freitags* music, sounds of troubled stammering utterance, very ineffective in conveying the sense that the evil has been conquered and the height reached, as compared with the triumph of earthly passion in the *Liebestod* in "*Tristan and Isolde*." So in Mr. Watts's art ; to the end it remains closed in and shaded by the troubled mystery of doubt and melancholy. Impressive, indeed, to all to whom imaginative art has any meaning, is the hopeless pathos

of his "Paolo and Francesca," the imaginative force in the hideous "Mammon" and the "Minotaur," the futile struggling sadness of the "Life and Death," the solemn power of the "Sic Transit," and of the "Court of Death"—grand requiems laden with sad funereal notes of gloom and mystery, but still waiting for the note of the resurrection which has never yet been sounded in his art. There is no gleam of brightness piercing through the doubt to prophesy any release from the tomb. In words are painted on the "Sic Transit," "What I spent I had," "What I saved I lost," "What I gave I have," but no hint of light breaks over the shrouded corpse, over the fading wreath of laurels, nor over the outlived wealth and joys of life; no sense of possession in the legacy which the giving bestows as an inheritance. We feel in this art the melancholy temperament of the pessimist to whom gloom seems more real, more true, more universal, than does the sunlight; the England of to-day, perhaps, but only that England which is immersed in greed and in cruel selfishness, in pain and squalor, resulting from the tyranny of the capitalist, always amassing, never distributing; in the gambling of the rich, and in the misery of the poor. Greek in his feeling for noble form, Italian in his gift for colour, Mr. Watts's work is nevertheless inspired essentially by some of the conditions of modern England, the "black country" of modern England; by the religious agnosticism, and by the line of thought which is full of doubt—doubt vague and questioning, but not as yet completed by any aspiring flight such as is found in the highest poetry and music of our era: in Tennyson, in Browning, even in Swinburne, in the "Songs

before Sunrise," and in certain passages of Dr. Parry's music. So far as these grand requiems may be wanting in their ultimate development of idea, so far they are, perhaps, not such complete examples of the quality of distinction as are other paintings by Mr. Watts. Though there may be much tragedy in life, life is not only a tragedy. That it is, should be the belief only of those, surely, who begin life with the creed of cynicism and end with that of despair. Thought which is on so high a level as to embrace the widest horizon, is surely incomplete unless it can with the wings of hope reach the highest zenith.

But besides these solemn dirges and the well known and, in certain qualities, incomparable portraits, Mr. Watts has created poems in colour which are in every sense distinguished. These are works in which the aim and the intention are less conscious than in the pessimistic utterances above mentioned, and which, in their direct spontaneity, appear to be a more native outcome of the genuine artist soul; his very own, before thought or intention consciously instigated the creation. In these there is beauty flashed on to the canvas with a passion of delight; a revelling in her subtlest cadences, in her most exquisite intricacies of tone, form, and palpitating colour. They seem to vibrate with a thousand delicate pulsations, and yet to retain also the repose of a noble simplicity recalling the majesty of Pheidias. Pre-eminent among many of these, in the special quality of *beauty*, is the smaller picture of the "Rider on the White Horse," the "Ariadne," the "Daphne," the "Return of the Dove to the Ark," the "Sea-Horses," the smaller design of the "Orpheus and Eurydice," the three small

sketches of the "Newly-Created," the "Tempted," the "Repentant Eve," "Endymion," and a few small sea pictures. A portrait called "Choosing," which, though a portrait, rises above mere portraiture on to the level of a creative invention, might be said to be the gem among the gems,—to be classed alone with art which is almost too great to have any distinct nationality, though the beauty which inspired the achievement of such a triumph is, in its type, English of the English. Another portrait which seems also worthy to be classed in a higher category than that of mere portraiture, called "Bianca," is only second to the "Choosing" in the beauty of the painting, though the loveliness of the sitter not being so great, the picture is perhaps less bewitching. There yet remain those pictures which have in them a spontaneous expression of beauty combined with a deep sentiment; the quality of *intimité* of expression carried to its highest intensity: "Watchman, what of the Night," painted originally as "Joan of Arc," but into which another meaning and a greater finish were added some years later,—the "Brunhilda," the "Ophelia,"¹ and others. No genius of the Victorian era has felt the value of that element of *permanence* which genius confesses more than has Mr. Watts. None has drawn more strength from the beacon lights of the past, from the Greek standard of form, or the Italian splendours

¹ It is to be regretted that Mr. Watts ever retouched this picture. Brought out one evening from among unfinished canvases and placed in the dark space of the large studio, a single shaded candle lighting it, the impression it produced was one never to be forgotten; but alas, something it had in it, through the process of finishing it up into a picture, got lost.

of colour ; still, in the essence of its sentiment, Mr. Watts's art is distinctly national, distinctly English.

Though evincing preferences which could only emanate from a class of thought and feeling essentially English in character, no greater contrast could be found to Mr. Watts's work than in that of Sir Frederic Leighton's painting. The great culture in all directions which the gifted President of the Royal Academy possesses, naturally tells very perceptibly in his art ; an influence but rarely to be traced in the art which is distinctly English in character. Artistic finish detached from any impulse arising from emotional preference, sought after on artistic grounds alone, the result rather of culture than of instinct, is not characteristic of our native school. Neither is a fine sense of balance, regulating the resources open to the painter, nor a right scaling of the importance of different effects in a work of art united with achieving a perfect though relative finish in all such parts, accomplishments which are found in so salient a degree in our English, as they are in Continental art. The want of these, in the eye of the foreign artist most essential signs of culture, has made our English school, till lately, but little thought of abroad. In so far as these signs of culture are prominent in Sir Frederic Leighton's work, so far it cannot be called English in its character.

When with a name is associated so much power and influence over and above the distinction shown in one art alone, it may seem difficult to dissociate Sir Frederic Leighton's painting and sculpture from all his other great and varied gifts, and to gauge the exact quality of them aright. Although, as a man, the one

is greater far who can do many things with an unquestioned distinction and power, the painter, as a painter, is neither greater, nor *less*, for being many other things besides a painter. Among all those who yearly exhibit pictures in the Royal Academy, there is not one whose work is more highly finished, nor so uniformly the best he can do, than that of its President; a best be it remembered, not only on account of its cultured labour, but also on account of the sincerity of emotion displayed in it. To one who was not so true an artist, and consequently less reverent in his attitude towards nature, it might have been a temptation, considering the infinite calls upon his time, to draw upon his great knowledge and accomplishments, and make these do duty for that much longer and more engrossing method involved in working solely and invariably from the true artist spring within his own nature; from that,—again to use Sir Frederic Leighton's own expression,—“sincerity of emotion” towards beauty in nature, which can alone inspire a work of art with a living interest.

Such sincerity is as an instinctive religious faith born with the highest artist temperament. To work from such emotion means truth, humility and dutifulness in pursuing his high calling. Neither to imitate, nor to pretend to admire, nor to attempt to disclose other than those preferences which are dictated by the choice of his own æsthetic sensibilities, is not only the evidence of truthfulness, but of intelligence in an artist. To quote again Charlotte Corday's speech before the Convention, “On exécute mal ce qu'on n'a pas conçu soi-même.” To be insincere is always to commit a stupidity, and assuredly not less so in art than in any other

matter. The permanent worth of any work of art is in proportion to the fineness of perception and the "sincerity of emotion" shown in the producing of it.

To the uncultured, inexperienced eye, sincerity is less obvious in a picture which has in it the elaboration and finish resulting from high culture, than in one the aim of which is simply a realistic rendering of nature. To paint nature with perfect sincerity, copying her as you see her before you, is comparatively easy; but to make use of nature, accentuating all that is in her that inspires the artist with a genuine joy in beauty, while eliminating those elements which are merely accidental and uninspiring,—making use of her in the service of a fuller theme than that which the eye alone can see at any one given moment, and to remain sincere both towards nature and towards such a theme, is quite another matter, and enters into quite a different class of difficulties. Culture guides the success of translating into a visible form such themes, but is comparatively less essential in realistic treatments of nature. Sir Frederic Leighton's art is essentially not realistic, nor does it belong to the modern romantic school of English art. It holds a place apart from all schools, though doubtless in the beginning of his career he was influenced by foreign methods. It stands now distinctly in a defined niche of its own; absolutely consistent and true to the artist's own aims, never falling below a fixed standard of finish, never attempting to paint effects, which, according to that fixed standard, could not be realized on canvas. In his sculpture he adheres to the same principles, and some there are who prefer his statues to his pictures. Nevertheless

it is to the pictures we must turn if we are seeking the poetry and sentiment in art which is most his own.

Standing before Sir Frederic Leighton's picture called "Wedded," Robert Browning said, "There is a poetry in that man's work I fail to find in any other," and this poetry is entirely English in its feeling. Every sentiment and meaning which Sir Frederic Leighton has ever conveyed in his painting is pure and healthy. He lingers with a caressing lovingness over all the perfections in the beauty of childhood and early youth, over that tender finish and fineness of surface and form compared to which every later charm looks rugged. Such pure delight, such absolute "sincerity of emotion" in sensuous joys are distinctly characteristic of our English taste; our anti-puritan English taste, which gave us the lovely word painting in Chaucer, Spenser, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare. These joys are spontaneous, sincere; they need no stimulus from the deeper draughts of experience to add a further meaning or interest to them. Each lovely thing is gratefully enjoyed as a gift to be revered and with infinite industry and veracity to be transmitted through art to others. What a sense of pure enjoyment do Sir Frederic Leighton's pictures convey! Who has ever revelled with a keener sense of beauty in the finished modelling of a child's hand or foot, or in the delicate curves playing subtly round the lips and nostril of a young face? All such beauty, which, though sensuous, is nevertheless pure, we English can, it is to be hoped, even in this latter-day nineteenth century, still enjoy, though it is never tainted by any suggestion which could degrade its purity. A happy sincerity, a

delight in the beauty of the human form, a tenderness and a poetry evinced in the depicting of it, a dramatic power in telling a story—these qualities, enlightened and refined by the traditions of Greek and Italian art, are ever present in Sir Frederic Leighton's work, and have secured for it fame and a certain amount of popularity. Still the greatest qualities in his pictures are not, it is feared, in tune with the æsthetic taste of the present day. The last phase in style which inspires the rather mock enthusiasm of the æsthetes consists in the endeavour to make difficulties in painting appear easy, to catch the difficulty as it were—flying, and to flip it on the canvas as if it were no difficulty. This process results in a very different kind of work to the cameo-like precision and sculpture-like modelling in Sir Frederic Leighton's painting. Compared to his work most of the painting on the walls of the Academy appears to be but a preparation; the work even of great masters appearing at times to be but mere suggestion by the side of his achievements.

To the superficial observer a certain quality of surface in Sir Frederic Leighton's painting, a monotony of smoothness, a want of pliability in the brushwork, —presumably a relic of his early training in foreign schools,—may disguise somewhat the rare distinction to be found in the more essential qualities of his art. The greatest difficulties in painting are never arrived at till the pleasant suggestion, having in it a spontaneous charm which often fascinates for the moment more than can any completer work, is destroyed by the toilsome labour of real finish. Nevertheless such a suggestion never satisfies the artist in whom exists

a true passion for his calling. Such a one will never rest contented with anything short of completion, and with a fastidious insistence works, destroys, labours on, ever refusing to admit any result as final short of precise achievement. Each artist has his own manner of work in obtaining this completion, and the result of a variety in the touch will make the surface in the painting of one master very different from that of another. Sir Frederic Leighton sacrifices much for the sake of real finish, not apparent finish, not merely to make the surface smooth and tidy, but for the finish that means added facts, more of nature. But the want of pliability in the texture of his painting often leads the uninitiated to think that the smoothness is the aim and not an accident in his work.

There is truly to be traced in the feeling of his art that "seal on a man's work of what is most inward and peculiar in his moods ;" the sign of individual intimate preferences and of the moving power which certain aspects of beauty have had upon the artist's innermost susceptibilities, though these may be somewhat veiled and distanced by being translated through the reserved form of a classic garb. Perhaps it is this reserve which invests Sir Frederic Leighton's art with that special aroma of poetry which Robert Browning found in it to a greater extent than in any other work of the time. Whether in his larger compositions, in the complicated grouping of many figures, such as the Cimabue picture being led in procession through the streets of Florence, the "Daphnephoria," "Heracles struggling with Death," the "Andromache," the "Cymon and Iphigenia," and others ; or those simpler

compositions such as the "Summer Moon," "Wedded," "The Mountain Summit," "The Music Lesson," "The Sister's Kiss," in all can be traced the sentiment of a poet inspiring the touch; not overriding by any assertiveness of sentiment the complete scheme of the picture, but lingering here and there with a wistful loveliness which has to be sought for within the barriers of the formal classic design. And it is this reticence in the expression of individual sentiment, this subduing it to the larger conditions of a more abstract style of art which, though it will never make Sir Frederic Leighton's work directly popular, gives to it a quality of distinction. In such reticence is an element of greatness which probably will only be duly appreciated when the more transient moods of thought in the present generation have passed. His work lacks altogether the sentimental, brooding-over-self quality, which, when allied to genius, is contagious, and gives an interest of a subtle, but perhaps not altogether wholesome kind to some of the best work of this era. Many there are, who, not feeling any special fervour towards beauty in the abstract, nevertheless feel more interesting to themselves when they have caught this contagion of sentimentality from works of art which are dignified by inherent genius. They feel flattered by such contagion; the hero-worship element ensues, adding the charm of a personal glamour to the beauty in the art. The honest desire for æsthetic culture is stimulated by a more subtle and bewitching interest, and the art which inspires this condition is raved about and worshipped by many who have but little knowledge of art or feeling for beauty in itself.

All this phase of popularity must necessarily pass

with the generation whose special condition breeds it ; what is really great in the works which inspire the sentimentality, alone surviving. At the time, however, the flame of popularity is fanned with a vigour which less personal qualities in art cannot command. No self-conscious introspection, no veneration of any personal sensibilities having stimulated the production of Sir Frederic Leighton's art, no personal or contemporary association is necessary to strengthen its appeal to public sympathy. The creed preached by Sir Frederic Leighton's art is that the dignity of beauty, the dignity of art, requires no sustaining from other sources ; that the value of art is a vital reality, requiring in her votaries worship bred by a passionate reverence but independent of any support or propping up from extraneous influences. Her strength is in herself ; she is herself the treasure, and only through her own integrate power is she a medium through which other influences are to be conveyed.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize that the work of Frederick Walker is in every characteristic English, so very palpably national is it on sentiment, matter, and manner ; and, though owing to his early death his works are few compared to those of the great workers of the era, of no English artist has the country reason to be more proud.

The feeling in Frank Holl's work was also undoubtedly English, though his preference for gloom in subject and colour suggests a foreign influence, as does also somewhat the touch in his painting. In a power of brush-work used in the service of a dramatic kind of realism, he and Sir John Millais might be compared, and this power has, in both artists, told

convincingly in their painting of portraits. But in the case of Frank Holl, as in the case of Frederick Walker, the greatest work which he might perhaps have left us, considering his natural genius, was yet unachieved when he died.

Turner might be considered more in the light of the forerunner and the inspirer of the landscape painting of the Victorian era than precisely belonging to it. His work is, however, most closely linked with the art culture of the last forty years, owing to the fact that it inspired the writing of the greatest book, having art for its text, which has ever been written in England—Ruskin's "Modern Painters," the classic of classics on landscape-painting. It is not as a critic that Ruskin deserves a place on the highest summit among writers on art: it is as an enthusiast. As Winkelman was an enthusiast for the Hellenic feeling in art, so is Ruskin an enthusiast for Turner's feeling for nature, that, like nature itself, has stimulated Ruskin's genius for word-painting, and has given his writing a quality which in its turn has been ardently inspiring to many latent art instincts, lighting the flame of enthusiasm within many a young student's heart, and resulting in the English school of landscape-painting belonging to the Victorian era.

It would seem that landscape-painters are more apt to be what is called *mannered* in their work than are those who paint chiefly subjects in which human beings or animals are the principal interest. The ever shifting aspects of a landscape require perhaps a firmer hold of the artist's own preferences in treatment on account of such impressions changing from moment to moment. The very touch seems to control the

situation in such work as that of Constable and Corot ; but in Turner's early and second methods there is no manner which is as prominent as the individuality of the aspect in nature which he is depicting ; there is no bias towards producing any peculiar class of effects caused by a special ease or preference in Turner's genius for rendering such. It is the universality in his sympathies and powers which places his art so incomparably above all other landscape painting. Every aspect of Nature, every sentiment suggested by her can inspire an invention for his brush. The majestic, the poetic, the rural, and the domestic sentiments in landscape are alike treated with an intimate sympathy and understanding and an extraordinary variety in texture is used in one and all. The "Liber Studiorum," the illustrations to Rogers' poems and to Rogers' "Italy," the "Richmondshire," the "Scenes on the Loire," the "Harbours of England ;" —in all his paintings of nature and of architecture he shows the same subtle, unrivalled power. From the centre of Turner's colossal genius have radiated the special lines of many landscape painters, whose art is inspired, as was his, by a truly national sentiment.

The decorative work of William Morris and of Walter Crane is not only the most original and the most eminent work of the kind that has been created in the England of to-day, but it is hardly an exaggeration to say of the England of any century. With it, as regards refinement and a distinctively English fancy, can be worthily associated the pottery of William de Morgan. All this work emanates entirely from a new and special art feeling developed by the Pre-Raphaelites.

And lastly, the work of our great illustrators, from Cruikshank to Sambourne, can be cited as being English of the English in character and sentiment.

Some years may pass before the relative greatness of these painters of the Victorian era will be finally gauged, but a lasting place in the history of our English art they have assuredly won. As sleep comes after action, a lull after a storm, apathy after excitement, now it would seem that the pendulum is swinging back, and dearth follows plenty. Neither in the number of paintings produced nor in a certain cleverness in handling the brush is the dearth shown, but chiefly in the lack of that power which is recognized by the general public outside the artist world as original and native born. In the new English school this general public sees but the adoption of foreign methods to express nothing in particular. A vague idea is latent that there is something of disguised cleverness in the work of this school, but the genuine interest and admiration of the multitude it does not command. Undoubtedly there is "something" in it, but does not the "something" arise out of the unwise rather than out of the wise tendencies in human nature; is it not a response to the modern unsound creed that the value of a work of art lies more in the manner in which it is achieved than in the real beauty or interest of the ultimate achievement? A work having for its aim *manner* can have no depth, no ultimate consistence in its meaning. It has so slight a hold on the spectator that variety, change, startling effects are always needed, in order that his attention should be arrested afresh. Shallow soils are always shifting!

Thought exercised by an artist requires thought

in the spectator, if the picture is to tell its tale, and life is too full in the present day for much lingering over pictures. All that the New English School assuredly aims at expressing is the slight impression which an object gives to the eye, an impression so fleeting in its character that it must not be accused for a moment of arousing thoughts, much less feelings, beyond an admiration for a dexterity in handling the brush, and for a certain kind of æsthetic culture, indigenous in foreign schools of art. We go into the Dudley Gallery, and we are confronted by canvases which have somewhat an analogous effect upon our eyes that the sound of a voice repeated in a phonograph has on the ear. There is the same sense of something like machinery having been at work with a human organ. If we know the voice in the phonograph we recognize it, but its sound is *funny*, it makes us laugh. And before some of the whisks of paint we see on these walls, which are meant to represent human beings, we feel that, though giving doubtless one impression of a man, woman, or child, they are so *funny*; we stand before them and ask—are they meant as jokes? The element of superficiality and queerness is so audaciously accentuated. They seem to be flimsy on principle, and like puppets without real blood or bone below the surface, they are thrown on to the canvas as are the slides of a magic lantern on to a sheet, creatures without feeling or solidity, merely skimming the surface on to which they have, with a smeary, fluffy touch, been whisked. The matter and manner are alike in essence shallow. But though we may laugh, we feel that, as far as they go, they are genuine, and at times exceedingly clever and con-

sistent exponents of the art creed that they obey. The eye has been treated like a piece of machinery, and the hand, as the phonograph repeats a voice, is in like manner made to repeat on canvas what the eye sees, in a manner which shall be a repetition of nature, but caught by one sense only, detached from the complex arrangements of mind, feeling, and association, flung on to the canvas with a casual spontaneity, and entitled a work of the Impressionist School. But surely this is either a title which it hardly deserves by reason of the restricted view of art to which its aims are focussed, or the artists of the new school are falling far below the standard of work which should be the outcome of impressions made by nature on human beings possessing complete faculties. As regards a sensitiveness to impressions, no two human beings are alike. Each of us is a different kind of instrument in so far as we possess a different power of responding to the appeals made by every sound, sight, scent, or touch that plays upon us through our senses. It is not only the performer, nature, who plays upon us, it is our own construction that has to do with the kind of sound produced.

Velasquez was an impressionist, Sir Joshua Reynolds was an impressionist, both worked from the visual impression made on the eye rather than from any previously conceived knowledge of how the thing they were painting was constructed or coloured: but such art as theirs is centuries removed from that which gives but the aspect of the surface, eliminating all suggestions which that surface contains of structure, thought, or sentiment. Mr. Ruskin has said that a painter must be able to paint too much of what he

sees before he is able to paint enough. Truly, the eye that is not trained by an exhaustive study of the appearance of the object which the hand has to paint is not ever likely to transmit to the hand a power of truly masterful execution. How often is heard the opinion expressed by modern artists that the whole point in artistic endeavour lies in the knowledge of what to omit ; but the knowledge of what is there must exist before the process of eliminating can begin ! In however broad a manner a subject may be painted, be it a treatment of human figures, animals, flowers, or fruit, unless the painting conveys in some degree the sense of construction and pulsation below the surface, the work will fail in giving a true and full impression of the object to the eye. The surface—whether the so-called skin in human beings—the fur in animals that hides the skin, that film covering the tiny cells that hold the living properties in flowers—the absolute surface of all living things but partially hides the pulsations and the vital organism below. The eye of every great artist perceives this complexity in the aspect of all subjects most worthy to be painted, and without consciously penetrating the surface by any study of how it is made to appear as it does to the eye, will give its full representation as it is affected by the moving living pulses below. This almost instinctive power has nothing to do with a knowledge of anatomy, however useful this may be in order to prevent the artist from drawing impossible proportions or positions ; but a great painter needs no such knowledge in order to represent a true and complete aspect of living creatures.

On the plea of "breadth," "les valeurs," "les

relations de ton," many modern artists omit searching for the subtler and the more solid aspects of structure, assuming that such omission is evidence of a more rarified sense in art. But it is one thing to annex the grace of breadth and "Allgemeinheit," after the rudiments of right proportion and structural subtleties and possibilities have been implanted by study from childhood, and quite another to start, not only without knowledge, but by purposely flinging it out of court as an effete obstruction.

Speaking of Hellenic art, Mr. Pater says : " 'Heiterkeit,' blitheness or repose, and 'Allgemeinheit,' generality or breadth, are then the supreme characteristics of the Hellenic ideal. But that generality or breadth has nothing in common with the lax observation, the unlearned thought, the flaccid execution, which have sometimes claimed superiority in art, on the plea of being 'broad' or 'general.' Hellenic breadth and generality come of a culture minute, severe, constantly renewed, rectifying and concentrating its impressions into certain pregnant types."

No master of painting ever combined the sense of structure with the accident of surface with more powerful effect than did Velasquez; no one is a better example of the truth of Mr. Ruskin's opinion, *i.e.*, that an artist must know how to paint too much of what he sees before he knows how to paint enough. Velasquez, by his early manner of painting, showed very distinctly that he possessed that power. He is the great idol of the modern impressionist, but in his greatest qualities the impressionist does not seek, apparently, to try and imitate him. When Velasquez had developed his greatest power as a painter, his

brush-work becomes truly amazing in its dexterity. But why? Not only because it has the qualities of unrivalled freshness, an incomparable sense of ease and rapidity in the touch, but because every hair of his brush seems to have left behind it a subtly true record of something in nature. In the truest sense is his work impressionist work, for the reason that, as the solid construction of objects in nature makes an impression on the human vision, as she fully places them before our eyes in various schemes of colour, toned by infinite gradations, played round by subtle complexities of effects caused by light, reflection, shadow, and atmosphere, so does the painting of Velasquez represent them. He does not to such representations add obviously any direction or preference of his own. Through the candour of nature alone does he draw on our sympathies. He painted, for instance, the four famous dwarfs apparently only precisely as they appeared to his eye—but with what a truly marvellous result! The quality of pathos in art can surely hardly be carried further? No conscious appeal to our pity, no didactic suggestion in a picture has ever conveyed such teaching, nor caused a more profound emotion than have these portraits of poor misshapen humanity, dressed up in Court gear, wherein their deformities were used as part of the pageant and displayed as accessories, may be foils, to all the magnificence and luxury, the pride and beauty of Court life. The strange pitifulness of the tragedy looks out at us in their wistful gaze. We feel a power in it beside which the appeals made on our interest by mere physical beauty pales. But wherein lies the secret of the tremendous effect these four portraits

make upon us? In the solid reality through which the subtlety of expression is achieved, in the consummate *fulness* with which every ingredient of the impression fastened on the great master's vision. So powerfully did the actual seize it, there was, it would seem, no room left for any independent accentuation or preference of his own. What in common, indeed, has such colossal work with the flimsy distortions by modern painters who sail under the flag of Velasquez! Mr. Whistler, who is not an Englishman, has done work worthy of a follower of the great Spaniard, for he, too, trained his eye and hand in the study of minutest detail as shown in his etchings. Mr. Sargent, who is also not English, works successfully on the same lines, but it is a field on which we English do not seem likely to achieve success, the strength of our native resources lying in other directions. We are never likely to display any high dramatic power through dexterity alone. Our Hogarth, our Reynolds, our Millais are dexterous indeed, but in each and all, sentiment and individual preferences underlie and guide the touch and inspire the dexterity.

As was said before, where sentiment and character do not inspire our æsthetic instincts, our English art ranks below that of foreign nations; but where they do arouse our more dormant facilities, our art should rank as equal, if not above, that of other modern schools.

All high art inspiration is moulded into a form chiefly through the sense of proportion, and all display of power in portraying character and pictorial effect is evolved through the fine treatment with which a true artist works out this sense. The sense of proportion

which appeals to our purely æsthetic side is greater in the French than in the English, but the wider view of proportion which establishes the relative value of the imaginative, the intellectual and the physical ingredients in a work of art, is carried out far further by the great masters of our English school.

The effect of a picture has to tell on the spectator in a rapid, immediate way, or it is overlooked in a modern exhibition: thereby the relative value of separate elements suffers. *Chique* in French art has allured the taste of the new school of English painters and writers. The aim is to startle more than to enforce the value of beauty: ugliness is less and less disliked as the sense which revolts against it dies out. Some of the most remarkable works in modern French fiction are from cover to cover a series of hideous impressions. To take for example a work which is justly a classic in the school to which it belongs, a work of consummate power—"Madame Bovary." In reading it, surely anyone who is genuinely affected by the art of literature, feels taken away for the time being into an atmosphere of such unalloyed depression, so absorbing in its influence, that everything beautiful and happy in the world becomes for the time tainted by it. It is as if the reader had said good-bye to all his or her "nice" friends and associations, and had willingly plunged into a social mire of excessively mean-natured human beings—in fact, into low society. "Madame Bovary" is a work of great art, and as such commands respect if not affection; but the fundamental *motive*, the incentive of its tone, is found in the fact that the author evidently finds vice more inspiring than virtue, ignoble qualities in human nature more

real than the noble, ugliness more in fashion than beauty. And we may extol the worth of beauty till Doomsday, it will still remain a dull and unreal virtue if the power of responding to her charms no longer exists, if they have become to our modern senses a dead language, a theory only. The ecstasies of theorists are felt to be but affectations, and those who want real stimulants unfurl the banner of ugliness and maintain that under it alone is found genuine truth and reality. But this modern taste turns to what it finds stronger food, not because beauty is deficient in nourishing power, but because this modern taste has spoilt its palate. The French use an art in feeding us with this ugliness which, as art, is often very admirable, serving up the ugliness and indelicacies with a garnishing of such clever wit and light cynicism that moralizing very seriously over them seems somehow out of place. To take one of the "strongest" writers of this class, now a classic in his own line, Guy de Maupassant: his writings may be inconceivably incorrect, we may be shocked and disapprove beyond words, our moral sense of refinement may be outraged and revolt, and we may throw his books into the fire ! Still, in justice we must admit that his work justifies its existence, in so far as it achieves its end ; the fun is so funny. The satire stings with such a finely-pointed deftness, it so adroitly ridicules a certain class of human foibles and absurdities ; and, though only really suiting the reader who prefers undress in taste—or rather no dress at all—its impropriety can hardly soil. There is no power of conviction even in its naughtiness by which any weight of influence can be carried. It is the writing of a cynic, who, like most of

the authors of the best modern French fiction, has only a real faith in his own performance, in the art he possesses, not in the matter he divulges. The effect, therefore, of the matter, however improper it may be, is very ephemeral, not causing any real disturbance in the moral equilibrium of the reader.

But quite of another order are the improprieties of modern English writers, who have inoculated themselves with the poison which leads to the focusing of every interest on those subjects which a fine taste feels had better be left alone. These have the full power of faith, they attack their reader with a momentous gravity; their skipplings into regions of improprieties are of an elephantine character. Like luggage trains laden with fulsome loads, they drag them along slowly, so as to pollute the air through which they pass. These do soil, for we English are thorough, and the writer and reader alike become absorbed in their subject, and linger over it, unlike the French readers of the cynical temperament, who skim the froth and forget the substance; unlike the sedate *littérateur*, who reads a "Madame Bovary" in order to enjoy its reticent art, which is too restrained and treats of too commonplace a world to attack the imagination, however much the joys of life may be tainted by the ugliness of its subject. Men and women in England, leading most respectable lives, read this new English literature, and allow their imaginations to be soiled by filling them with a side of nature they would not in any wise allow to enter into the action of their lives. Imagination and the most intimately personal thoughts are very closely allied, and to soil the imagination is distinctly to make our natures less beautiful,

and also less capable of responding to beauty. A pretence is made that, by studying these dissections of hideosity a *real* knowledge of human nature, unidealized, is being acquired. On the contrary, these creations are distinctly ideals, ideals of phycological deformities, created in order to arouse and startle the interest of those jaded by a kind of work which is at once exhausting and unsatisfying; work which leaves a dreary kind of fermented unrest in the worker; consequently a craving for more and more excitement on the surface of life as the power of strong deep feeling and of joyous sensation is left further and further behind. Our generation has lived to see some of Mr. Ruskin's prophecies fulfilled. Through being starved of any wholesome beauty to the eye, all sides of the nature must suffer, and in putting out the light of one sense the level of the whole creature must become lowered. When startling ugliness is administered by the light of genius, and "the light that is in them be darkness, how great is the darkness!" Nature allows of no vacuum. Those who become vacant through excess of doing and thinking and pleasuring to all really nourishing sources in life, will seek to cheat the dulness of indifference by arousing some new sensation. Startling ugliness seems to have been chosen as the best palliative in art and literature for their complaint.

This seems at the present moment to be the irremediable state of things, and any number of Cassandras may wail and may warn, and not the slightest attention will be paid to the warnings and wailings till, in the nature of things, the pendulum swings back, and the world, having exhausted itself over the mistakes of

excessive activity, will try to readjust its taste on more beautiful lines. . At present beauty and purity are out of fashion—quite obsolete—the wrong things to admire, or on which to expatiate, either in literature or art. Still, it might be suggested, that even among the most advanced it would be difficult to live without some standard of purity in action. But the pendulum will swing back. “The good will prevail,” said Æschylus, who may perhaps be rightly considered as good an authority on the *vraie vérité* of things in general as the modern know-all cynic. Beauty will again revive as a healer, and as an influence tending towards distinction. Whatever adverse influences there may be for the moment in men and women’s worldly passions, her battle is always being fought for us by nature. We have all a nationality in common in the great universe of nature, and in nature there is beauty, in nature there is distinction. But those whom civilization has over-cultured and under-nourished, those who are fastidious in their taste, and defective in their power of responding to beauty, may say: nature cannot inspire us; she is untidy; she is fleeting; she entangles herself in a superabundance of detail. Our physical senses may revel in her; but our cultivated sensibilities get confused. We want a guiding spirit, one to give a form to nature before she can strongly impress us; a finer discrimination than our own or we but flounder about in confusion amid the multiplicity of designs she squanders before our eyes. She can even be tiresome from a want of due accentuation! This may be the effect of nature on many of us who are too blunt to find out her inspiring power for ourselves; but once let a really great artist disentangle one of her themes

and stamp it with human genius, and those of the denser apprehensions return to the instigating original of such a theme in nature with an awakened keener interest, with new eyes to discern its beauty, a new heart to love it. To take a very simple example: have not wall-flowers and tulips become precious to many, precious as a royal regalia is precious, since that flowered border to the inimitable "Chant d'Amour" has given them such a rare distinction? So all great art leads us back to the great source of beauty which we can all share in common. The great human gift of genius brings us back when we have wandered away from the orthodox legitimate springs of human feeling to awaken afresh in us the power of nature, to make us see with the eye that is single, so that the whole body may be full of light. To the eye that is single there is ever a world of renewed surprise and delight in the telling of the story of the year, told by the sky, the sea, the garden, and the field. To the eye that is not "evil," the sapphire skies of night, studded with gems, are still a wonder. Spring with her tender grace, is ever a fresh miracle; from the moment of early awakening, when the gold cups of the aconites, fringed round with leaf, press upward from out of the loosened earth; when the snowdrops break into white bells from amidst an army of tiny gray-green swords, so clean and pure, relics it would seem of the snow that has lain on them as a shelter from the frosts: when later, the star of the frail wind flower, the pale amber of the daffodil, and against the gray stormy skies of March, the faint pink flush of almond bloom and silvery fur of palm begin to decorate the winter world with coloured detail of design; on into the time when boughs of thorn are

weighted with clusters of sweet-scented flowers, and every shrub and tree revel in a festival of blossom, tossed up against blue spaces of spring sky, and sheets of wild hyacinth, echoing the sky, are laid down as a carpeting for the earth—the whole world a great floral feast. The lilies and roses of June, the burning flames of autumn's tints and flowers; the deep sleep of all these nature's treasures beneath the beauty of winter frost and snow, all the history of the year is an ever present, ever recurring antidote against the second-rate, the ugly, the vulgar in taste.

If only we human beings awaken to her tune, nature, the most lavishly generous of artists, spreads out her beauty in all times and in all seasons to feed us, and to feed us with that food which harmonizes with those passions and emotions which fire life with its fullest meanings; passions, and emotions which can be beautiful and distinguished, though our modern life has flavoured them with a debasing materialism, and has taught us to gloat with an astounding monotony over the purely lower instincts of our poor human nature. But alas! *blasé* as we are in our over-tired culture, though Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field, these require an accentuation through the power of human genius before they arouse us to a keen sympathy in their beauty. They are so ever close at hand, so invariably recurrent that a power of producing surprise, wonder—a feeling of strangeness seems wanting in their doubtless marvellous perfection. "A certain strangeness," says Mr. Pater, "something of the blossoming of the aloe, is indeed an element in all true works of art—that they shall

excite or surprise us is indispensable." Except to those possessing what we call genius, in other words, senses for ever keenly responding to appeals made by nature, and further excited by the gift of being able to put such response into a form, such an effect in viewing nature rarely exists without the excitement through some human association being first kindled. The human spirit must be inflamed by contact with human genius before our over-tired complex modern natures can respond with any genuine rapture to the beauty with which Solomon in all his glory was not to be compared. It is for some idealized by an association with the passion of loving another human being, or beings, better than our individual happiness; for others through the medium of poetry. To many, perhaps to most in this century of reading, the words of a poet will interpret the distinction of nature better than will any other medium; and lastly, nature is idealized to some by the creations of art.

We may, at the present moment, feel that there is no great inspirer in the rising generation to illumine our path; but one, or many, may be close at hand, great enough to influence the vagrant fads of fashion that are at present wandering on to foreign lines; to readjust the distorted aims which are blinding us to the primary and fundamental reason for the existence of art, *i.e.*, the beautifying our world and our feelings towards it.

The distinctive mark in the great poetry of the Victorian era, expressed in very divers manners, is a note of aspiration, a note springing above the doubt and agnostic puzzles in modern thought and in the religious feeling of our times. There is in this poetry,

notwithstanding the want of what is called orthodoxy, a faith over-riding and dispersing the dark armies of despair,—the faith that Tennyson gives utterance to in the lines :

“Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven : wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to faith beyond the forms of faith !
She reels not in the storm of waving words,
She brightens at the clash of ‘Yes’ and ‘No,’
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer thro’ the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She finds the fountain where they wailed ‘Mirage’ !”

The note of faith also with which Matthew Arnold ends in some of the finest imaginative lines ever penned by poet, the verses entitled “Morality”—

“I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space ;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
’Twas when the heavenly house I trod
And lay upon the breast of God.”

The note of faith which concludes Browning’s “Easter Day”—

“But Christ rises . . . mercy every way
Is infinite—and who can say ?”

It is the same note of rapturous exaltation which makes passages in Doctor Parry’s music truly transporting with the force of a spiritual passion—the

passion that we find in the genius of all true poets: that unfettering of the reason by the spirit so that human nature can rise to things beyond and above reason—things that any effort purely intellectual is unable to reach, exhaust its capacities as we may; the passion of the soul, which blows off the ugly side of doubt and—

“Sees the best that glimmers through the worst,”

blows off the cynicism, the squalor of irreverence, the envy, the jealousy, in fact all those things to which the strongest human intellect, unreleased by such unfettering, may yet be heir to. It is the note most simply and purely sounded by the practical development of the teaching of Jesus Christ: He brought a possible distinction to all; He gave a dignity to poverty, a poetry to the meanest work, a hallowing beauty to the most commonplace life. The key-note in the genius of all who have ever done work which has in it the quality of distinction which “inexorably corrects the world’s blunders, and fixes the world’s ideals,” is faith,—faith in the value of the work which the demon of the worker forces him to create—the faith which causes *aspiration*,—aspiration not necessarily bounded by possible achievement, in so far as the human imagination conceives when at its greatest height things which no other human faculty can fully carry out, but which yet propels the character of the work on to a higher level than any can attain which is done without faith.

“He who aims the star, shoots higher far
Than he who shoots the tree.”

Imagination is fed by sources which have in them a stronger force than have the means by which the arts are manipulated. Such aspiration may or may not

be consciously linked to any spiritual emotion or to any religious creed; it may be, and mostly is, in these days, a purely abstract instinct for seeking something more perfect, more beautiful, more real than the vanities of the world. It is the impulse that propels those souls, in whom is born a desire for something in life higher than that which is of the earth earthy, to work with a passion of industry on things which the world at the time may neither care for nor reward—the instinct in our higher taste which allows of no bartering, no commercial expediences, no compromises, being, as it is, a law unto itself, and in itself possessing alone a power of reward and punishment; the misery of shortcoming and failure in expression, the joy of truly succeeding. How indeed can any other reward affect an artist in comparison with this self-judgment; the artist, who, working with a keen sincerity of emotion towards the beauties and meanings in nature, possesses a further grace, that something of his own which, simultaneously with the delight of admiration, goes forth to meet the beauty which seizes and possesses him. A new thing is created from this combining a sensitiveness to nature's aspects and this power of inventiveness: a new thing partly nature's child, partly the inventor's. As in chemistry, two separate essences united will make a third containing an element possessed by neither separate ingredient, so does a truly original work of art give a rendering of nature which shall be as the apex of a triangle, the base of which are the aspect of nature and the creative faculty of the artist.

This creating a new invention in beauty is no easy labour even to the most gifted—the excitement and absorption it entails isolate its position from the

ordinary conditions of labour, and focus the passion of an artist on perfection of expression as his aim, an aim not on the lines of ordinary worldly commerce or ambition. This thing created by the artist is his child; shall it not have full life and meaning? is any toil too great in the service of its birth? Matthew Arnold said of poetry: "Perfection in the region of the highest poetry demands a tearing of oneself to pieces which men do not readily consent to unless driven by their demon to do so." So in great art it is the demon of the artist who can alone fully propel his powers; who can alone arouse his deepest passion. The strength of this demon in an artist's nature—the conscientiousness with which he devotes his life to its service, has, says the history of all times, nothing whatever to do with his morality as a man. If such service entails high thinking, his level of thought may be raised above those whose work is dull and uninspiring; but, even should this be the case, such high thinking may be exhausted in the exercise of his æsthetic and perceptive qualities, leaving nothing which tends as a moral force in the living of life. The very isolated and absorbing nature of high art may tend to distort his understanding as to his duty towards his fellow men. But, however that may be, facts prove that one artist may be noble-minded, truthful, chivalric, unselfish—all that is best in character; while another may be crafty, untruthful, avaricious, selfish and vain—all that is worst; yet if both are possessed of a demon who will equally tear them to pieces, their work may be of equal nobility, influenced as it is, much less by the character of the man than by sensitiveness of perception and power of

intellect. The holiness of feeling found in the work of an early Italian master was not always an echo of any holiness in the tuning of his life; nor does the nobility seen in a work of art necessarily correspond to any nobility in the character of the worker. The incongruities to be found in those possessed of the artistic temperament seem to be quite without limit. Still, unreasonable and ridiculous as it may be to idolize the artist as a man because his demon has demanded him to tear himself to pieces over his work, and he has done so to good effect, likewise is it undiscerning and ungenerous to under-value his work because the character of the artist is obviously faulty. Both one and the other extravagance emanates from a tendency to confound the person with the work. Many who cannot appreciate the one take refuge in that vulgar inquisitiveness which finds its keenest interest in running to ground every life which has in it the elements of notoriety (the Madame Tussaud-like business that puts into wax alike the greatest hero and the latest miscreant who has been hanged); who think it as important to know the gossip about Wagner's life as to understand and enjoy his music. Let genius have at least the benefit of its own power! Those who enjoy it the most will be the last to wish either to over-rate or under-rate the man, or not to do full justice to a high aim in the work, whether or not it corresponds with the general character of the artist. The note of faith and aspiration is equally evinced in the art of the Victorian era as in its poetry; but the province of art is not, and can never be, the same as that of poetry. Art is a perfectioning of life and its sources of pleasure and health through the sense

of sight; poetry, through the thoughts of the brain; and it is the sign that the art of painting is becoming a dead language to a nation or to an individual when things that are not hers to give are demanded from art. Hence the cry raised by the new school of "art for art's sake." The affectations on one line bring about affectations on others. As influences have been demanded from art which are not hers to give, and the world has been somewhat wearied with the cant that mixes up, with no sense of distinction, the art of painting with the art of poetry, the art of preaching, the art of cultivating culture among the poorer classes, the swinging back of the pendulum has recently established another kind of cant; this cant of the school which eliminates every quality from the aims of art but those which respond to the æsthetic sense, truncated and detached from all other senses. "Art for art's sake" certainly, by all means; but for the sake of an art which is really a response to our natures as they are developed and cultured in this our nineteenth century; not affecting to belong to creatures removed from savages by one kind of culture only. Surely it is only reasonable to ask for art, a beauty which shall be on the level of our tastes in other matters, thoroughly human and sympathetic in its qualities, and corresponding to our enlightenment all round.

The highest lessons from art are not learnt from the pictures that ostensibly try and teach us something, but from those before which, as Goethe said of Winckelmann's power: "One learns nothing but one becomes something;" before that art which, in responding to something of our own, creates a joy which is like finding a friend, and which enriches and stimulates our

sensations. Surely if art can do this vividly and conclusively, we need not demand from her anything that could be better or more desirable in our secular life. To send us on our way rejoicing, our senses stimulated by the possession of a fresh source of impersonal delight, such a benefit surely justifies the existence of art in a much more definite and decisive manner than would any attempts to teach us lessons, religious, moral or philanthropic, through a wrong medium. Art cannot teach us our duty to God or to man, but she can teach us a certain duty towards ourselves. And that lesson is, that those things which are interesting as recording human passions, sentiments, or actions ; or that are beautiful as the waves of the sea, the hills, the flowers, the meadows ; or as the dreams of the poet are beautiful, such things expressed through the magnetic medium of great art, can brighten the darkest hours of life, and can be treasures and nourishing companions in all hours. Short of spiritual help is there any influence in life that can be a more constant comforter, a more sane influence, or one that can more effectually chase away despair ! To quote the famous sentence which concludes Mr. Pater's "Essays on the Renaissance." "Well—! we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve—*les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des surcis indéfinis*: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world,' in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible

into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moment's sake."

Our hours, days, weeks, months, years—our lives are made up of moments, over which as they pass we have the control to fill or to leave empty—to beautify, or to taint with ugliness. If, indeed, into a certain number of such moments we can bring an inspired contentment, exempt from the pains and perils of friendship or of love, yet responding to those demands in our nature for the food which gives us an impetus of "quickened multiplied pulsations," and saves us from immersion under the dust of common-placisms, that immersion which can lead passionate natures to despair, can we ask for more from any of the relaxations of life? And this is what art can be to many when it corresponds to their higher culture. In the very unsubstantiality of her essence lies her greatest use; for, unlike most good things in life, the enjoyment in her value entails no responsibilities. We feel the better and we owe no bill to the doctor, except that which it is a further delight to pay—gratitude to the artist. But,—that inevitable *but*, that creeps in where it is a question of any of the joys of life,—from out even of the healthiest enjoyment in art

springs a development which seems to exaggerate and distort her influence, and finally destroys her power of giving joy. Instead of being a delicious medicine she may by over-ripeness become a slow kind of poison. The greatest art of all times and of all countries has been exempt from the doubtful poisoning pleasure which excites an unlawful interest because it degrades our higher sensibilities, æsthetic and intellectual, by uniting them to what is of the earth earthy; from that Mephistophelean cynicism, which claims for such earthiness a place as a necessary element in the food of the gods: and the sentiment in the great work of the Victorian era has had a healthy *bona-fide* faith for its basis; but it seems as if such a faith were wellnigh exhausted and that out of the very culture of art has arisen a cynical aspect towards her. The happiest moment when in most civilizations the highest perfection in art is achieved is when the prosperity of a nation is almost at its height, but when it is still in an earnest, serious attitude towards its culture; when the full substance of education has not yet been dispersed by efforts to take short cuts—to force effects by a display on the surface—when, in fact, culture has not yet begun to be treated as a means, but is still an end in itself.

The unsoundness in our present education arises from numbers, haste, and competition. If it takes much time to be wise, we cannot be wise; but if, in order to get on, we must be supposed to be wise, we must put on the semblance if we have not the substance. Enormous buildings are apt to get out of proportion with human beings, and, being designed on a bigger scale than that which the human eye

can take in and adjust rightly to its vision, their separate parts fail to affect the eye in a right relative proportion; so likewise, the rush and tear of life, finding still the same capacity of brain and body in human creatures wherewith to meet the strain of thought and action put upon them, overbalance the sense of proportion in life. There are endless methods and concealed contrivances whereby our minds and bodies are encouraged to be elastic in order to expand to this state of things. Still, we cannot make ourselves really different in size and capacity from what nature intended us to be, and, as the fibres of an elastic band will weaken and are apt to snap when always kept stretched to their fullest, so, when our bodies and brains are always kept on a strain, some part of us is weakening all the time, and may some day snap where it can never be mended. In a well designed and perfectly executed dinner the fact is disguised to the *gourmet* that he is over-eating himself, because his natural appetite is cajoled into not realizing its right limitations by reason of the enticing nature of each dish as it follows the other with just the right flavour to encourage greediness; so does the excitement of mental competition and ambition disguise to a worker the fact that the brain is being over-fed, and that there is not in it sufficient of what corresponds to the gastric juices to assimilate the quantity forced into it: that, moreover, there are no Hombergs, Vichys, and Carlsbads to retire to where the bill is paid for all the too good dinners of the season, to make good the strain on the tissue of brain caused by mental surfeiting. When thoroughly injured by a continued straining from over-activity and excite-

ment, measures may be taken to give the mental apparatus a rest, but till the mischief is nearly irretrievable, there is rarely found, with all the incitives to overwork which exist for the highly educated, intelligent classes of working men and women, the control put on the ambition to compete, which keeps brain-work within the scale of healthy human capacities. Some take refuge in well manipulated superficiality, and these may get over the ground without sustaining any serious harm; but where the mind cannot manipulate itself so as successfully to seem to know instead of to know, something must suffer in the mental organization. Too many demands made on the mental machine change even if they do not injure it, run at the pace necessitated by the exigencies of competition. The mind cannot gather strength from other parts of the nature, nor become enriched and consolidated with the whole of the being; so that, unfortunately, that which most often suffers is the element which is the most important in all intelligent education; that power of viewing a subject, after all information has been attained thereon, from the standpoint of an individual judgment. Such a power is not only of value in enriching the sources of experience in life, but if united with special gifts, can add mental treasures to the world at large of a kind which are original. It is what is called *originality* which suffers from excessive cramming, from the over-use of the acquiring faculties at the expense of those which can assimilate such acquirement with the varied gifts of each separate personality, thereby giving knowledge a new force by stamping it with the impress of a living individuality.

And where is the distinction which shall correct our blunders? How is any distinction possible while the world goes scrambling over the course of life, the bulk of the men and women in it using their intellectual capacity in no other service but that of a self-interested ambition? The greater the number of highly educated men and women, through the increase of population and the cheapening of literature, the more necessary it also becomes for the number to keep its head if any element of distinction in life is to be retained. As the taste for centralization is happily on the wane, may also the undue belief in the "all-round man" follow! In him is found the human form of the principle of centralization. In theory, all thoughtful people agree that the aim in all right education should be to insist on a thorough knowledge of one subject, or class of subjects, in order that the student should be able to test what real knowledge is like, and the vast difference that exists between possessing knowledge as our own, and holding it merely in the outskirts of our brains as reflections from those who are the real possessors. The tendency of the "all-round" education is, on the contrary, to encourage the student to acquire, as his most useful weapon in life, a power of skilfully manipulating with his brains, so to speak, subjects which lie on the outskirts of it; which he has not himself thought out exhaustively, much less felt out. An immense agility can be acquired in this art of manipulating surface-wise every subject which comes in usefully either for social or professional success; but the value of such acquirement benefits no one but the intellectual acrobat himself, and that very superficially. It never raises a man or a woman in the estimation of

the real student or artist. It has been said of a famous man, who is a prominent marvel on the "all-round" lines, that he appears to know everything about every subject till the real expert on any one subject presents himself; then the apparent knowledge—so precise yet so universal—collapses like an air-ball when it is punctured. It may be an extraordinary mental feat to know so much about so many things that it is only the veriest expert that can find out a flaw, but it is a feat which can only arouse the admiration we feel in seeing a clever trick performed, not such as we feel for real wisdom; and assuredly in such a performance the quality of *distinction* is not evinced. Neither does it necessarily exist in the mind of the expert, for he may see and know his own subject, and that alone, losing by his concentration in it all sense of the place it holds in relation to other subjects of human interest. It is not the knowing a thing, however well, it is the placing such knowledge in its right position amongst other things known and felt, wherein lies the secret of the true wisdom which brings distinction in its train. The best definition of the quality, as it is described by Matthew Arnold, would be perhaps an instinctive right sense of proportion, the right scaling of the importance of the separate elements that make up life; the placing instinctively and conclusively, as foremost in importance, the influence of the spirit—imagination it might be termed by the secularists—as second, that of intellect; as third, that of the body. No work of art or literature in which these influences are not gauged in their relative worth can take the first position as distinguished art. Though, perhaps, hardly always

traceable to this rudimentary principle of proportion, multitudinous are the ways in which this sense creeps into the manipulation of all truly great work in art or in literature ; and, in a still more important manner, into the lives of the possessors of distinguished souls, those in whom *being* is more important to the world than *doing*—those who throw the force of their natures, not into worldly self-interest, but into what is best for the commonweal. While distinguishing the different degrees of obligation and responsibility entailed by the circumstances of life, these invariably put first and foremost those undertaken by their own free will and through their own personal action. This sense of distinction we find taught at times in the form of religion, at others in the form of morality : it matters little what garb it wears, it remains, and always will remain, the most precious, the most admirable quality in human nature. It is the secret of the ultimately conquering power of those who live in the world but are not of it ; whose influence takes root and spreads wide for the bettering and the beautifying of life in any society, or grade of society, where it is found.

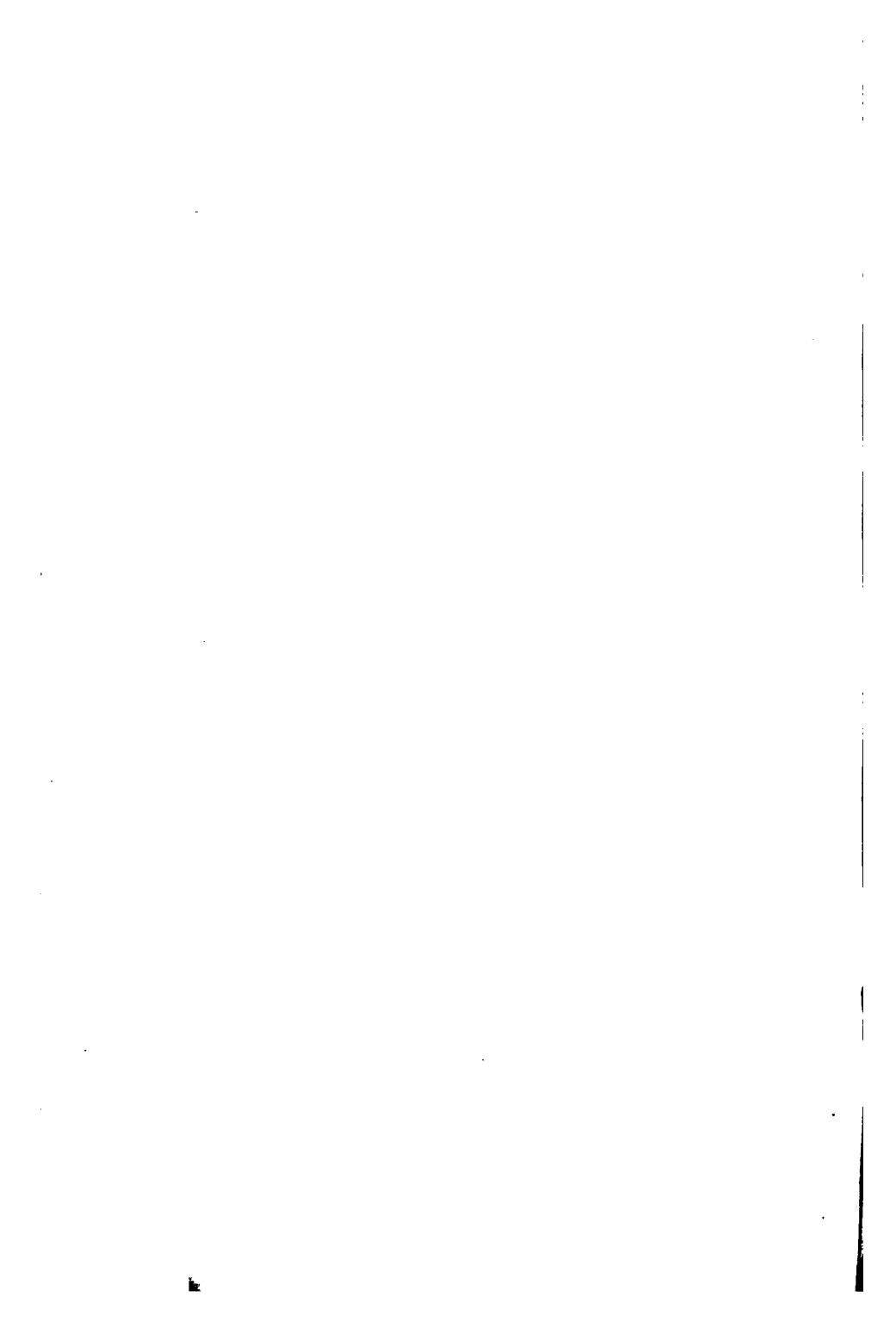
Even from a purely secular point of view, any religion worthy of the name of religion tends to distinction and to refinement in education. By the standard it gives to life and to its objects outside any worldly self-interest, its influence dwarfs the self-assertiveness of the human powers of brain and hand, thus laying the axe to the root of those things which are only of importance to the selfish interest of each individual as separated from his fellows. Religion indicates a summit to human aspiration which admits of no pride in human achievement during the process

of climbing. It gives a standard to thought and feeling outside and above the small material interests centred round the daily life of each of us. Religion is the only ground on which all classes can meet, which is at once common to all and above all, as much above the king as it is above the peasant, and towards which both are in the same attitude. It is the only real field on which socialism can succeed, because on entering it all individual and class assertion of superiority must vanish ; it is the only element in the education of the masses which gives them an aim in common with the highest culture and the best sort of refinement.

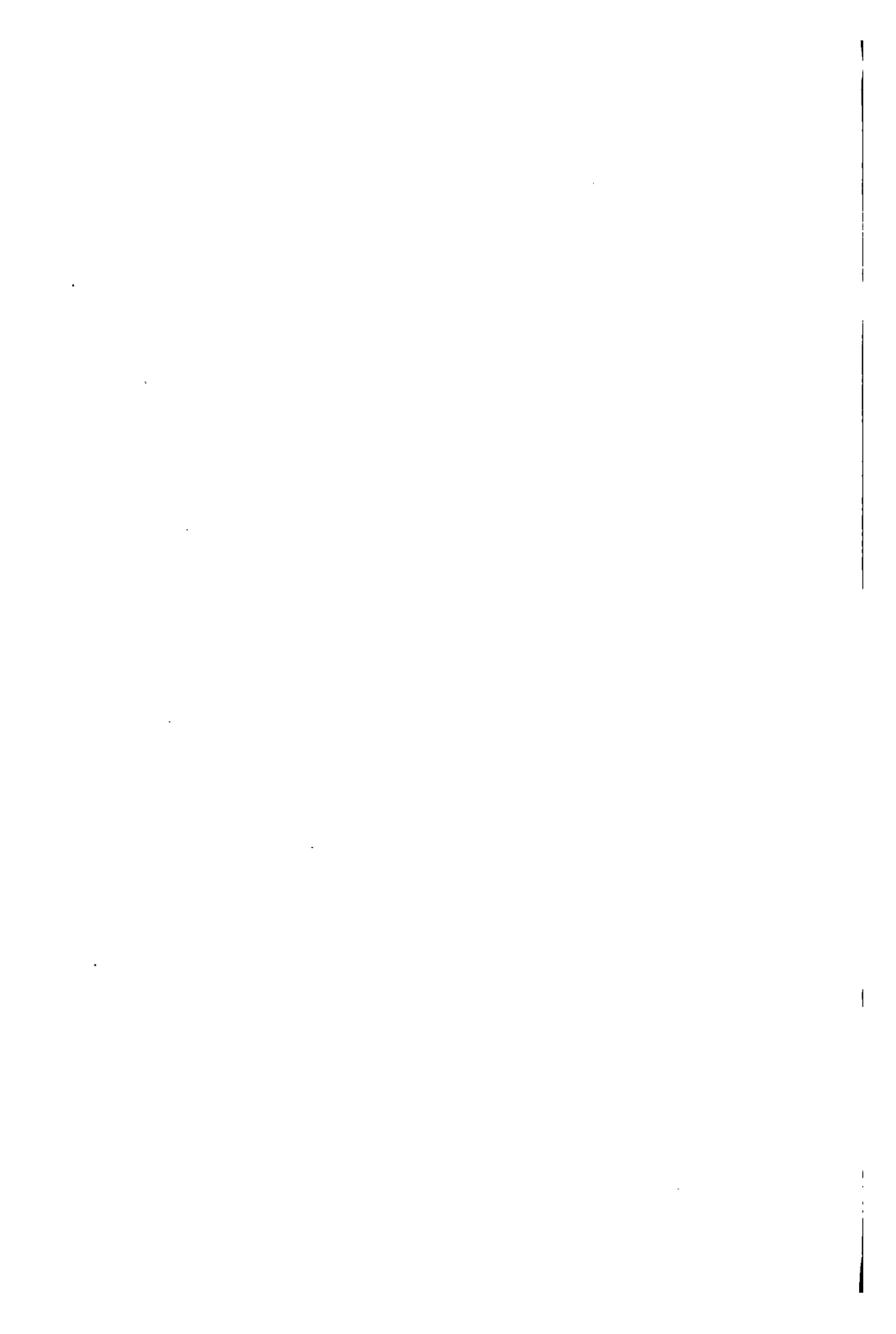
Implanted in human nature is the instinct for self-preservation, which is apt to ripen quickly in the struggle of life into a complete immersion in self-interest. Without the incentive of a spiritual emotion we do not, in our civilized communities, easily sacrifice ourselves readily for the highest, the truest, or the most genuine in the abstract. Hence, when religion is eliminated from education, we see in unalloyed prominence the natural selfish tendencies of the natural man. A few, whose instincts for beauty are keen, whose tastes are fastidious, may keep aloof and look down on this ugly, selfish struggling of the human mass with disgust tempered by pity ; a far greater number, not made in any exceptional mould, but in whom Christianity is a working power, may gauge with equal sobriety the qualities of selfishness and vulgarity in the struggle of the human mass, though sympathy instead of disgust is mingled with their pity. It is from the teaching of such, to whatever sect or class of opinion they may belong, that a counter influence to the squalor and vulgarity of

selfishness is secured. If religion be a motive power at all its first obvious service is to eradicate that exorbitant consideration for the interest which concerns only self, and those belonging to self, which is so contrary to any distinction of soul, and which is likewise fatal to the economy of any nation, the interests of a state becoming of no importance to the selfish individual when they do not coincide with his own or with those belonging to him. To fan the flame of our vanity by idolizing ourselves or those who belong to us, all this vulgarity, the Christian religion in any pure form, though for other motives than those of refinement, wars against. Without its influence in education selfishness becomes actively rampant, acknowledged even with ostentation. Mr. Walter Bagehot said: "It is one thing to drop the forms of religion when the mind has expanded to its full growth, and another to start an education without it. We have yet to see what a generation is like who from childhood has grown up without any religion." Our generation is, alas! beginning to see what it is like, and how it affects our art and literature. One of its immediate effects is to annihilate beauty. As selfishness is ugly, so is all the work ugly which is solely done for selfish motives, for though selfishness may be salient in the character of a great worker, no great work was ever produced from motives of selfishness alone. Great art may be produced by those whose characters are stained with every sort of immorality, but it is not the immorality which produces the great art. A deep passion rooted in faith—a faith having but little to do with what we commonly call morality, but which nevertheless over-rides the

meaner and more material forms of egotism,—a passion worthily to propel into a lasting creation, the flash of the God-given Promethean fire; such a yearning it is that has given form to the inspired work of the world in all times, and to that of our great artists of the Victorian era. As regards their genius, "They are great and free, and have grown up on the soil of their own individuality, creating themselves out of themselves, and moulding themselves to what they were, and willed to be."



I. M.



I. M.

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THE foregoing pages were written in December, 1895. Among the New Year honours bestowed by the Queen was a peerage on Sir Frederic Leighton. On the 25th of January he died. It is but a little more than a year ago, at the age of sixty-four, while still in complete command of his many exceptional gifts, with powers amply ripened rather than impaired by years, and while still expending the energies of an extraordinary vitality for the welfare of all things connected with his duties, that the illness developed which has deprived the world of the existence of one who, by common consent, can never be replaced. It would seem as if in his one life had been concentrated many lives; as if one central controlling will had ruled several careers. His career was a veritable feat of vitality, realized as truly astounding by those who are in a position to gauge the difficulty of combining the various occupations, so differing in kind, that filled it. The laborious absorption which the art of painting and sculpture involves—and it must be remembered that Lord Leighton, year after year, never failed to produce work which in quantity and in the quality of completion far exceeded the average of work finished by other academicians—was combined in his life with

occupations necessitating the exercise of an entirely opposite species of faculties: such as presiding with unprecedented success over an institution like that of the Royal Academy; writing the discourses delivered every two years to the students of the Royal Academy, discourses notable for style and for the learning and critical sense they evinced; fulfilling, as no other president ever has fulfilled, the many social and other duties attendant on the position outside the council room; acting with energy as a member of the governing bodies of the British Museum, the South Kensington Museum, the Royal Society, and throwing himself into the affairs of these institutions as if each exclusively claimed his interest; while never failing to give a helpful sympathy and, as far as was possible, time to all who were in any sincere way occupied by an interest in art. "There is no one like Leighton!" That was a common exclamation from all whose lives came in any real way in contact with his. Since his death the public has echoed the same opinion. Extraordinarily versatile gifts, a generous expenditure of self in the work not only found ready, but discovered by him through his energetic desire to do the very best for every cause and for every person he could help; a tactful understanding with which he guided and governed those over whom he presided; a brilliant, intellectual machinery, and a rapid power of mind in using it, a Greek-like vivacity in riddling through any intricacies in thought or argument to the very core of a just conclusion; an unselfish guiding of his individual life for the benefit of the many; an absolutely unswerving and disinterested sincerity and veracity of character; for all these virtues—all these

powers, the public has, since his death, expressed an enthusiastic appreciation.

Perhaps the sermon preached by the Archdeacon of London in Canterbury Cathedral eight days after Lord Leighton's death gives in a short space a more complete view of the salient characteristics of his life, as directed by the moral, no less than by the æsthetic side of his nature, than any other description which appeared at the time of his death.

"No man in our day has done more than the late distinguished official head of English art, Frederic, Lord Leighton, to teach us—the prosaic, commercial Englishmen of the nineteenth century—how to respond in our ideas of form and colour in art, and in the general possibilities of gracefulness and dignity, which our many-sided life affords to the gloriously beautiful setting in which the Divine mind has placed us, and to the ideals which it has implanted in us for our perfection and refinement in all our human and earthly relations. It has sometimes been held that devotion to the sense of beauty must necessarily be sensual, and lax in moral fibre. That is a libel on the Divine Creator of all that is beautiful. It is only the perversion of that sense that is materialistic or immoral. Leighton has proved to us once again that the keenest enthusiasm for graceful beauty in tone, colour, and balance, is compatible with the purest idealism and absence of all that is base or ill-regulated in association. And he carried his idealism into every phase of his manifold life; wherever he was, on great public occasions, as President of the Royal Academy, in the councils of the British Museum, the Royal Society and the other learned bodies to which he belonged, he

was always the princely man of culture, refinement, good taste, and high principle in gesture, appearance, thought, and speech. He showed what the higher aspects of social and civic life could be made. There was nothing he did which he did not adorn. A master of stately and cultivated eloquence, skilled in telling and graceful phrases, a profound student of art in all its branches, a brilliant teacher, a model of pleasant and noble manners, he had at the same time a warm and tender heart, and an imperative sense of duty. The Academicians loved him as a true brother and father. Many are the young men whom his wise influence has steadied and turned towards devotion to sound work. His consideration for others was proverbial. When his last terrible attack came on in the early hours of the morning, and he could not remain in his bed for the pain, he sat for two hours on the side of it alone in his agony, because he would not disturb the servant. There are few men who have done so many acts of disinterested kindness, and unknown, unheralded benevolence : hospitals, beneficent institutions of all kinds, cases of private distress and sorrow have lost in Leighton the ceaseless sympathy of a genuine and self-sacrificing friend. The calls upon his time were very great, but he fulfilled them all with unfailing interest and punctuality. He had a keen sense of his duties as a citizen ; he was one of the most enthusiastic volunteers ; and at the time of the London riots, he was one of the first to enrol himself as a special constable. He was as modest as he was distinguished ; his life was inspired by the Christian spirit ; and whatsoever things are nobly serious, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, things of virtue and

of praise, to those things he devoted his art, and the powers of a brilliant and highly gifted mind."

It has been said that in his character and in his versatile powers Lord Leighton resembled more the notable men who belonged to a past age, rather than to the present; that his individuality recalled the distinguished men of the Italian Renaissance. A completer view would, perhaps, suggest that he belonged to a state of society into which our present nineteenth century might develop, provided such a future evolved out of our present, the best developments that could be evolved. The Italian of the Renaissance was surely hardly notable for the qualities which in Lord Leighton were so salient to all who knew him at all intimately. The instinctive character of his philanthropy, so entirely devoid of the element of calculation, which led him so generously to help, not only his fellow labourers, but all who wanted help,—and he ever erred on the side of credulity rather than of suspicion,—the notable spontaneity of the whole nature hardly recalled the highly cultured, discreet, not to say sly Italian who lived when the whole of life was more or less a fencing against the dangers of favouritism, and the hatreds bred by scheming and party antagonisms. The fine cameo-like chiselling with which he wrought his thoughts and ideas into words and into art, might alone suggest such an analogy.

The originality shown in his unique personality emanated less from any special originality in mind or thought, than from a combination of many qualities most rarely combined. His life is a proof that the evils in our present conditions need not of necessity

be triumphant ; that a versatility of gifts need not extinguish the power of concentration, nor of completion ; that, however great are the forces of general activity, a constant use of such forces in life need not extinguish the poet in a man ; that an ardent passion for beauty need not invade a strict sense of moral rectitude ; that, however warmly sympathy is shown for the benefit of fellow creatures, a self-centre of absolute sincerity may be maintained ; that gifts of heart, even in these days of distorted education, are felt and acknowledged to be more beneficial and more laudable even than the very brilliant gifts of intellect, with which they were combined ; and that finally a nature can retain a fine sense of proportion, and can be crowned, even in the rush and tear of this nineteenth century, by the rare grace of *distinction*.

The possibility of such a rare combination of qualities, and of such a distinction, arises partly from the fact that the nature in which they existed lost none of the short span of life in brooding over itself, nor in allowing thought to be saturated and enervated by a self-conscious satisfaction in success. It wasted no time by recurrent feeding and fanning the flame of vanity, nor by chewing the cud of pleasant elation through living the successes of life over again by such a brooding. No one ever enjoyed success more than did Lord Leighton ; but it was innocently, and generously enjoyed. There was no egotistic desire that such success should be further accentuated through his being placed isolated above his fellows, and the one alone to enjoy it. He genuinely desired success for all, and he put his real heart into all the help he gave to secure such success for all. Though the

radiant joyousness displayed as a rule in his intercourse with others was balanced by corresponding fits of depression, a natural vitality prevented any morbid feeling becoming chronic. Lord Leighton was a great reader of books in many languages—his facility as a linguist was abnormal; but he did not, as a rule, expend the forces of his intellect on purely intellectual lines—independently of any action. Doubtless, as Mr. Walter Bagehot used to say, "If you have a mind to play with, there's no better game than to play with it;" but it is a game which takes time, as much, or more, than does any other, and Lord Leighton had no time for any games except for those which were connected with his work. His play was combined with the labour at his easel, even while he was on his travels by way of taking his holiday.

He was no idealist, needless to say he was no materialist, no one less so, nor does the term realist seem to recall his nature exactly. He was—if such a word can be used—an actualist. The actual was to him of primary importance. Any speculation that could not be focussed to an actual bearing on life had but little charm for him; it was the actual in action, in thought, in feeling, which engrossed his energies. But the actual meant a great deal more to Leighton than it does to most of us. Life and its vivid interests was spread over a much wider area; so many more of its various ingredients were such very actual entities to him. Warm and intensely alive in his sympathies, he rigidly refused to allow his judgment to be biassed permanently by any feeling. His intellect pierced through any clouds of prejudice, his own or any others for or against the matter under discussion, and seized

by preference, as far as it was possible, the *actual* position. Once this ascertained, his ultimate judgment would be mellowed by great tolerance.

Difficult would it be to find a nature that responded more spontaneously to the beauty and the dignity existing in a sense of duty,—not with Leighton any dry tiresome theoretic attitude towards the “stern law-giver,” but that of one to whom she was, like other beautiful things, too actually ever present to need forcing into view. The world of sensuous enjoyments was a very wide and a very actual world for him. Beauty of every kind played on a very sensitive instrument, when it made an appeal to his nature, giving him very positive joy, no complication of subtle interests beyond the *actual* influence being required before a responding echo was sounded, because so pure and innocent was his joy in the charm of beauty. So also attendant on his personal influence, there was no power of mesmerism, nor of the black arts. In every direction it was healthy and bracing. Even a Nordau could have discovered no remotest taint of the “degenerate!” His preferences in all directions were spontaneous and sincere; outcomes from his own nature, without a shadow in them, conscious or unconscious, of any pose of mind, or of any influence from ulterior or disguised motives. The most natural and truthful of men, the least dramatic in real intercourse, he had nevertheless as keen a sense of form in life as he had of form in sculpture and painting. With an unerring tact,—far beyond what is confined within the limits of that tact directed merely by the good taste of the world, a real tact of heart,—he met every one on his or her best side, maintaining nevertheless a

perfect sincerity towards all, giving himself away only in the exact measure which corresponded to his actual feeling. His nature revolted against flattery, and it was not easy at times to convince him of the sincerity in any admiration for himself or for his work. A correspondent to the "Times," who evidently really knew and understood him in his youth, writes: "He was the most brilliant man I ever knew." Those who have known him during the last thirty years of his life may with truth add—and *the humblest*. He was ever in the attitude of a student seeking to acquire what he thought he lacked; seeking to reach nearer to the actual of his highest aims, never losing a hold of his self-centre, but elevating and purifying that centre from all sources of culture, from contact with his fellows, with all beauty in nature, and all loveliness in art. The verdict of not a few of his friends must be: no great man was ever more lovable, no lovable man ever more great, nor was ever a lovable and great man a better friend! To how many since his death has the thought come: was there ever such a friend as Leighton? It was no vague theory of friendship he gave to his friends, it was a living help of unselfish human sympathy, and once a friend ever a friend. However severely his friendship was tested, and on some occasions it was severely tested,—and with a torrent of words he could express his indignation, for his own standard of the responsibilities involved in friendship was of the highest,—with the torrent it passed. The ugly side of the nature of others never stained his own with any ugliness; and when the indignation had passed the transgressor who had caused it remained a friend.

Owing to his great versatility and power in many

different directions, Lord Leighton might by some be confounded with what are called the "all-round" developments of these latter days ; but, whereas in the votaries of this equalizing universality of interests, the aim and the charm seem to consist in dispersing the powers over many fields of action—in the fascination of acquiring an equal skill in racing over many areas of thought and action, Lord Leighton's aim in using his various interests and his great culture sprung from, and returned to, one central guiding passion, to the devotion of which all his powers and his versatile gifts were but as servants.

Those who work from the centre of an inborn necessity in their nature, from the gift of a strong passion for a vocation, do not allow the less absorbing interests of life to infringe on the sacred ground of such a vocation ; nor do they so easily commit the mistake so often committed by the votaries of the "all-round" creed—that of approaching every subject from a like attitude of mind—of thinking that the same process in working the machinery of the mind can bring about anything like true completion and perfection of attainment on lines of development necessitating a use of very different faculties. The study of the exact sciences are worthless without the groundwork of precise knowledge ; the study of religion is worthless without the reality of a spiritual life being ingrained in the nature of the student, and, though the existence of a fine imagination will in all study enhance the value of the result, the poet without its development is non-existent, whereas many votaries of the various *ologies* may, with the very minimum of imagination, do useful work. Each vocation necessitates the focussing of

the mind in a more or less different attitude. However apparently well equipped in every requirement, the "all-round" marvel possesses what is after all but a smattering ably manipulated by a first-rate intellectual training, instead of a full mastery of the core of truth in any of the branches of knowledge which he studies, for this can only be seized by those to whom it is illumined and fed by an inborn love. Lord Leighton knew the things he knew too well for him to make any mistake as to whether he had truly mastered knowledge on a subject or not, and realized fully that special knowledge requires a special attitude of mind, as well as an acquirement of written or spoken facts. His whole life was consecrated to the interests of art—an endeavour to prove that she was among, if not beyond in worth, any other of the many beloved careers in life; that she was worthy to direct and command the most brilliant intellectual efforts, the most versatile gifts, worthy not only of the time, but of all that was best in the character, the mind, the aspirations, and the complete heart service of a high-minded, public-spirited Englishman. Often has the phrase been heard, as a form of praise: "But Leighton is so much *more* than an artist!" used by those who did not realize that the *more* was given and developed by him as part of his service to art. But little appreciation would have been accorded to such intended praise by Lord Leighton himself. Art was his first, his early love, and to her, in the wider form of homage to beauty of every kind, he ever remained loyal with the most passionate devotion of his heart. Unswervingly throughout his life, he directed all the powers and gifts of his nature to her service; and in the con-

stancy and persistency of such homage to beauty lay the true glory of his life. On wide and patriotic lines he fought her battles in public; with an intimate loyal tenderness, with an unrelaxing reverent industry did he serve her at his easel. Ugliness—ugliness, moral, mental, and physical, was his arch-enemy, whom he fought against with all the powers and gifts of an extraordinarily powerful and gifted nature. The result of the battle during his life has been but a partial victory; but in giving a high standard in feeling, in thinking, in acting, and by showing what the life of a votary at the shrine of beauty should be, he has left it possible for the future of English art to be raised to a higher level through his example.

"Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille
Doch ein Character in dem Strom der Welt."

The greatness of Lord Leighton's career resulted from the power he possessed of combining in his one span of life these two developments; its beauty, and its poetry, in consecrating such a triumph to the love of his life. No worldly ambition, no facility in displaying his great gifts ever weaned him from his easel, and only the necessity of serving the interests of art in a manner which he alone personally could, ever stole an hour from the time he allotted to actual painting or sculpture, and that was stolen with much reluctance.¹

¹ Some years ago, writing to a friend who had forwarded a request that he should speak in public on behalf of a subject sympathetic to himself, Leighton answers that he finds he must give up all "speechifying," even on art, outside the walls of the academy, otherwise an infringement on the hours devoted to work at his easel must be the result. "And that," he adds, "is, I hope, the last thing you would wish."

Again, in May, 1888, he writes: "The reasons which have

Conscious, with an almost exaggerated consciousness,¹ of the want of sympathy with which his own art was viewed by those who have been, during the last thirty years, more popular favourites with the public which thinks itself the most artistic part of our community, and while generously seeking to admire everything to be admired in work entirely opposed to his own in sentiment and manner, he never swerved in the painting of one single picture from following the guidance of his own art instincts, though this resulted in his work holding a somewhat lonely, detached position.

It is only natural that the side of a life which the public considers most laudable is the side which it best understands, and all matters that can be made public property through newspapers — such as speeches, now for a good many years compelled me to decline any ‘public utterances’ outside Burlington House, have increased in weight and force as life advances (and strength wanes), and as the demands on me grow in every direction. I am *constantly* asked to speak in public, not only in London, but all over the country, and in all cases the demand is founded on strong claims in so far as I am an ‘official artist.’ Assent once is necessarily assent always, assent in half the cases would mean the *gravest* injury to my *work*, and I am a workman first and an official afterwards.”

¹ In many superficial criticisms which ignored any serious aim in his painting, treating it as devoid of the more noble and ennobling attributes of art, it was designated as “pretty” rather than beautiful. In nowise attaching much value to such criticisms, founded doubtless on a certain monotony and smoothness of surface and a want of pliability in the texture of Lord Leighton’s painting,—the only quality seen by critics who had eyes but for the surface alone, he was, however, somewhat sensitive to such condemnation. In a postscript to a letter he writes, “By the bye, if you do think my pictures pretty, please don’t say so, it’s the only form of abuse which I resent.”

and all that can be recorded in print from the world of action—these are in our modern days the performances which lead most quickly to fame and notoriety, for the widest public is reached most directly through the newspapers. About pictures and sculpture there is doubtless much written, though seldom is any of the special individual worth of art conveyed by such writing, whereas all but the delivery in a public speech can be given in every newspaper. Consequently Lord Leighton's speeches, his work for the interests of the Institution of the Royal Academy, his dealing (as was said in the "Spectator") for Art, with governments "as potentate with potentate," his appearance as a brilliant entity in the midst of the most brilliant social life of the country; these, even more than his pictures and statues, made him the very famous man he was and gave him his wide reputation as a public man. But no one ever realized better the truth that the art instinct of the individual worker requires a service of a very different kind to the service that makes a man famous in his own time, however much such fame may insure a lasting benefit to art through enforcing the dignity of her position among the various interests of the world. He, better than most artists, knew that a nature in which there is an earnest and loyal devotion to the practice, as well as the understanding of painting and sculpture, must feed itself from very different sources from those which public or social life provides as nutriment. As a Roman Catholic will go into *retreat* in order to renew the power of the spiritual life wherewith to combat the difficulties of the world, so, in a like manner, did Leighton go into the *retreat* of solitude during his autumn wanderings, in order to feed on the

beauty in which, as her votary, he felt it a duty, as well as a joy, to revel. And to few has beauty in effects of nature and art ever appealed with a greater or more genuine force of joy than to him. In solitude he enticed this joy. Solitude was his real treat in life. "I am enjoying unsociable solitude *keenly*, bear as I am," he writes from Ireland last autumn; and again, "Kind people ask me to stay in country houses, 'to hear the nightingales!' Imagine going to a country house, full of acquaintances, to listen to the nightingales!" Formerly he would go quietly away to Hampstead Heath and spend the night in the solitude of a little inn to hear the nightingales. Much to his sorrow, the ever-spreading building has, for years past, chased them away.

The coarser-grained public that gauges the value and the glory of fame in proportion to its showy qualities, and whose adulation is for very obvious success, has naturally but little sympathy to accord to that inevitable sense of failure which is the drop of sadness in the lot of all who aim high. Failure in achieving as compared with the aim, the hope, the aspiration! This sense of failure affecting different temperaments in various ways makes one artist morbid, another irritable, another humble. Humility is a quality never worshipped by the Philistine, and seldom by any public; therefore it is, at best, the result, not the special life needed in the producing of art, which elicits any appreciation. Whatever may be the ultimate achievement of the effort to produce a work of high art, the process of producing it, with rare exceptions, is humiliating to the worker himself.

No praise, no applause, no admiration bestowed on other gifts can disguise to the artist himself this anxious, ever-present sense of failure! "Il faut payer pour tout." And assuredly the finer qualities of distinction are not bought without the only payment which can purchase them in this world of imperfections, *i.e.*, a forfeiting of the self-congratulatory comfort which wraps a mediocre soul in self-complacent ease. Dr. Talbot says in one of his Leeds sermons, "to be a complacent Christian must be very near to not being a Christian at all;" likewise, to be a complacent artist must be very near to not being an artist at all! The sense of an easy, pleasant life of success is not compatible with the unrelaxing industry, the anxious strain which doing his very best in the most difficult of all labours entails on the painter or sculptor who aims at high art. To achieve any approximate success means depression, fortitude in working through depression, power to achieve notwithstanding depression.

"Creative art . . .

Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive yet in their weakest part
Heroically fashioned."

It is at his easel that the great artist receives the lesson which most surely refines the metal of his nature. In other vocations where a great position is reached, the whole of the living of life, its minutiae, as well as the most important occupations, bring to the great man a realized sense that he is successful. In the work of life, as in its play, the fact that he is distinguished among his fellows is continually being accentuated to his mind. His days are made more glorious to him through the influence on others of his

own powers. His attitude must, however unconsciously, be more or less one of treating the ordinary mortal as part of a machinery to use in the service, and for the purposes of his more important action. However conscientiously the man great and distinguished in action makes himself the servant of all, there is nothing in such a process which, outside his own conscience, tends to any humbling of his character. But by the side of the easel of the very greatest artist stands not only nature whose intricacies of beauty are infinitely impossible completely to unravel, but likewise the artist's own imagined conceptions, and within himself the all usurping, passionate yearnings for further powers of expression. Humbling, indeed, is the actual labour of art. To seek the ideal is to seek disappointment. All ideals in life, though they constitute its highest joys, must be paid for by this heavy price.

"Still do the quiet ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting."

Two unfinished pictures resting, during those last days, side by side over the coffin in Lord Leighton's studio seemed emblems of the two different sides of his nature, which will be remembered by those who knew him; the one recalled the sincerity and depth of his true poet nature; the other the bright, rippling sunshine on the surface. The "Clytie bidding farewell to Apollo," the passionate, surely, of all pictures ever painted the most passionate!—and by its side the smilingly joyous "Bacchante." Many, most of his acquaintances, can retain but the recollection of the joyous sunshine, the glorious sense of life and power, the kindness, and the never-failing vitality and grace.

The minority who had passed beyond the forms of life, built up by a nature which is reserved on the side of any deep feeling, as a screen to protect such feeling from the intrusion of the more indifferent, will retain in all memories and associations of their friend a sense of *distinction*; that quality which invariably maintains in a nature its own inner integrity, its loyal truth to itself, and by natural sequence the impossibility of being "false to any man;" the quality that discerns with a poet's truth of discernment, which is the grain and which is the chaff in life; that, amid a rare combination of gifts, indicates those gifts most worthy to be prized; that counts as best among many choice honours bestowed those most worthy to be revered; that quality of distinction which finally, amid all triumphs and successes, even of an exceptionally prominent and favoured career, crowns the nature with a sense far more keenly alive to its own shortcomings than to its achievements.

There are two classes who, as a rule, are able to discern this quality of distinction—the nearest friend and the distant general public. A third class exists, the opinions of which, happily, die out in their own generation, holding the intermediate position of acquaintances. Among these are often found those who are ever ready to carp at, and resent, the enthusiasm which such distinction excites; those who prefer that there should exist no such quality in their acquaintance, for the reason that it puts an impassable gulf between the highest and best kind of fame and themselves. These are those who see in a man only that side of him which, revealed through a form of life—a form used partly as a disguise, is the side which

alone comes in contact with their own understanding, who, preferring to consider the distinguished man in no essential quality differing from themselves, see the real and the true only in the mediocre, and criticise all praise bestowed on that which rises above it as exaggeration and flattery. Bishop Claughton once observed, "No one should dare to be a critic who has not the power to be an enthusiast." But where is the cynic who will not "dare" any and everything? Modesty itself as regarded his own claims, and generous in his feelings towards others, Lord Leighton was the last to commit the sin against good breeding involved in enforcing the fact to his companion for the moment that he was inferior to himself. His naturally passionate temper, super-highly strung nerves, and almost fastidious sensibilities, had been schooled into complete control. His attitude towards all with whom he came in contact was genial, and to those, even only superficially sympathetic to him, there came out at times an almost boy-like radiancy of animal spirits which made it difficult to believe in the various complexities in the temperament existing below the surface.

On the day of Lord Leighton's funeral the dense crowd that lined the thoroughfares as the coffin passed were responding by a serious respect to the worth of those great human qualities which excite admiration in all Englishmen, and which the pathos and loneliness of death carry swifter and further into the heart than can any number of continued years of living and activity—those qualities shown by the self-sacrificing sense of duty which had made a great man the servant of all; by the sincerity and courage of

character which had raised all who had worked with him on to a higher level ; by the heroic way in which he met the great agony of his death, a worthy sequence to that fortitude with which for more than a year, facing the peril in which his life stood from hour to hour, he went through the duties and labour of life with undiminished zeal. But besides admiration for all these virtues which an English crowd can quickly realize and appreciate, there was a something felt, though not fully understood,—not reasoned out consciously—yet felt ; a spark in the embers of fame, which the glamour connected with a name gradually fans into a flame ; but which at first, like the simmering murmur of a great crowd, is inarticulate, as if held under the breath,—a something beautiful and uncommon, unattainable to the ordinary mortal, struggle as he may in the battle of life, that quality of *distinction*, the quality which “at last inexorably corrects the world’s blunders and fixes the world’s ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet,” nor yet the ordinary notorious public man, nor the ordinary obvious friend for a Leighton !

E. I. B.

February, 1896.

IS A GREAT SCHOOL OF ART
POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT DAY?



IS A GREAT SCHOOL OF ART POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT DAY?

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IN Plato's "Phædrus" Socrates says: "The soul, which has seen most of truth, shall come to the birth as a philosopher, *or artist*, or musician, or lover; that which has seen truth in the second degree shall be a righteous king, or warrior, or lord; the soul which is of the third class shall be a politician, or economist, or trader; the fourth shall be a lover of gymnastic toils, or a physician; the fifth a prophet or hierophant; to the sixth a poet or imitator will be appropriate; to the seventh the life of an artisan or husbandman; to the eighth that of a sophist or demagogue; to the ninth that of a tyrant;—all these are states of probation, in which he who lives righteously improves, and he who lives unrighteously deteriorates, his lot."¹ "George Eliot" makes Cosimo say in "Romola," "*Va!* Your human talk and doings are a tame jest; the only passionate life is in form and colour."

We may or we may not agree with Socrates in putting the artist in the first rank, or with Cosimo's view of the place art takes in life; but it is as well to

¹ Jowett's translation, vol. i.

know on what a very high level wise minds have placed the artistic nature before we consider the present or possible future condition of art.

Somehow the art we see in our annual exhibitions, taken as a whole, hardly enforces to our minds the truth of the wisdom of Socrates. His opinion of the highest worth of the artist soul is not brought vividly before us in looking round the Royal Academy walls, or even if we select solely the works by the heads of that institution. The souls of the Royal Academicians may have come to the birth having "seen most of truth," but their work does not often suggest any very superior insight into the essence of things; nor can the modern artist be said, as a rule, "to forget earthly interests and be wrapped in the divine, so that the vulgar deem him mad and rebuke him; they do not see that he is inspired." Nor should we think, judging from his work, that to the successful artist of our time "human talk and doings appear tame jests" by reason of the fulness and passion of his life in form and colour.

Yet how much of the world is occupied in art, how much expertness in it exists, what a quantity of pictures crop up every year, cleverly painted up to a certain point! There is undoubtedly much art produced, but surely it is not the same art which Socrates and Cosimo mean. Work which is the result of imitation, which Socrates puts in the sixth rank, we have in abundance; but portraiture that is merely the result of the imitative faculty, though it may earn respect as a valuable record of people and places, is not high art, and cannot inspire the enthusiasm which creative genius commands. The highest art is the

result pre-eminently of an effort of the soul, in other words, an effort of the highest part of our being, as well as of much that is mere instinct and mere aptitude of hand, eye, and intellect. It is the impress of something beyond and above mere mind that inspires that feeling of inimitable perfection in the best work of the Greeks, and, in that, the highest Italian school.

Now why should we rest contented, feeling as we do such an interest in art, in looking towards the standard of former times as so hopelessly unattainable in the present day? What has been done by human faculties ought to be able to be done again, if only we are wise enough to find out the true conditions which developed those faculties to perfection, and strong enough to reproduce those conditions.

Possibly one reason why much of our modern art strikes us as falling so short of the old inspired work is that we do not even apply, either to its performance or to its consideration, that higher part of our nature which alone can raise our efforts to the high level art ought, we think, for the wholesomeness of our civilization, to occupy practically as well as theoretically. There are, however, some works of art produced in the present day, which make our condition anything but hopeless. Whilst work of the highest intention is being carried out by the rare artistic gifts of even only two or three artists, we have but to create a sympathy with that work among the masses, and a powerful influence for good would at once be the result; and, besides the individual genius of a few great men, a certain amount of interest is awakening on the subject of art in almost all cultivated classes. To direct this interest towards what is really noblest, to extend it so

that it touches the masses in a wholesome way with a great and genial refining influence, ought to be the keen desire of the advanced philanthropists of our time, as of all true lovers of art.

The Royal Academy has just elected the most perfect of presidents, Sir Frederic Leighton, who will no doubt do all that culture and art-knowledge can do to get that institution into a proper frame of mind about its duties, and the influence it might possess, if it took a wide view of the vital interests of art ; but even Sir Frederic Leighton's influence will not touch the worst difficulty, which lies in the absence of the most elementary instinct for beauty in the masses.

All earnest thinkers on the subject must own that there exist serious obstacles in the conditions of modern society—obstacles, moreover, which seem ever growing—to the spreading of the noblest art feeling even among the educated, and that just complaints may be made against the art, and still more against the criticism of art of the present day, taken as a whole.

There is a quantity of work turned out as fine art in which there is no pretence or shadow of an aim at high intention, and, though recognized by all who have a fine taste as worse than useless, choking up the better work and overcrowding the market with pictures which degrade art, it has a bad influence on the public, even if only by counteracting the right effect of good work. But besides this spurious art, there is some wrong condition in our social life which makes the right influence art has had on highly civilized societies in which she has flourished, very difficult to produce on the masses nowadays ; and it is useless to think of

a great school of art if we ignore the fact that it is out of the essence of a people, not from a crust-like, superadded culture, that such great schools arise. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and it is out of the emotions, out of the sensibilities, but mostly out of the religion of a people that art springs.

Undoubtedly we have two or three great men among our artists, poet-painters whose work would hold its own in all times and in all schools, also many earnest workers who imitate nature faithfully, and a few singularly gifted decorators; still all those who have studied art as she flourished in artistic nations must agree that this is not an artistic age. The gratification of the sense of the beautiful is not essential to our well-being or to our happiness; ugliness does not offend us seriously. It is true great struggles are being made through a desire for general culture and wide liberal sympathies to seek and find the beautiful, but that instinct which makes things sightly without a struggle has left us. The poet Morris and a few other decorators and architects have landed some of the richer class beyond the horrors of aniline dyes and the depressing architecture of London streets: still aniline dyes remain a success, and Belgravia and South Kensington, hideously dull in their monotony, and vulgar in ostentatious and useless size, are fashionable, are daily deadening the sense of the beautiful in the rising generation brought up in their streets and squares. Here and there an artistic house appears, a spot to be measured by the foot, compared with the miles of dismal houses built by contract for as small a sum of money and as costly an appearance

as are compatible. Utility and convenience are often used as pleas for ugliness ; but if ugliness inspired the mental discomfort which it does in artistic nations, ugliness would not succeed even if found to be useful and convenient. It would not succeed if the opposing dislike was strong enough to be a force. If ugliness produced the jar on the ordinary educated English mind which dirt, untidiness, or an absence in surroundings of the "respectable" element produces, modern external life would not be ugly, for the practical reason that a jar on the mind or eye unhinges the thoughts and spoils the temper, and therefore interferes with the work of life. No ; what might be called *artless art* has left us, and we have done our best in India and other countries with which we have come in contact to destroy that instinct for beauty.

About four years ago, it was said, there were only two shawls in the whole of Cashmere for sale which were free of the violence of aniline dyes, and two years ago some Englishmen went to an Indian gaol where carpets are made, and found the natives not only imitating English patterns and colours, but copying English imitations of Persian carpets ! We have but to go to the Baker Street bazaar or the Oriental Warehouse to see that half the modern Japanese work is being spoilt by arsenic greens, and that element of haste and hurry in the work so utterly destructive of all beauty.

What is it in the modern European life which has extinguished the natural wholesome love of beauty ? Can we trace it solely to the eager, greedy way in which we pursue the passion for making money ? Mr. Ruskin's writings suggest this to be the case, but surely

this, being the unlovely squalid though exciting passion that it is, can hardly have had the strength to carry out a work as completely as the eradication of beauty in the external life of the masses has been carried out in the last century. In England we can, perhaps, trace much to the influence of the Puritans, who, with their wicked destroying of all that attracted the senses, possessed undoubtedly the beauty of moral strength; and, though possessing it in some pride and ostentation, moral beauty was and is felt to be so necessary to the perfecting of life, that the Puritans' influence still remains a power, though much of what was wholesome in it seems to have ebbed out of it.

Somehow it has become strangely mixed up and twisted into the utilitarian notions of our middle class, giving a moral force to feelings which are selfish and stupid. It is probable that one of the chief reasons why the monstrous tameness and ugliness of modern buildings are not tempered by any accident of prettiness is because the ghost of the Puritan still hovers near his descendant the utilitarian, and preserves his work from any hint of remote beauty, on the ground that sin and beauty are almost synonymous.

There is a story that Mr. Tennyson protested with a builder at Freshwater against the ruthless cutting down of trees. "Why do you cut down the trees?" said Mr. Tennyson. "Build your houses a few yards back, and you could save them. Trees are beautiful things." "Trees is ornaments," replied the builder. "What we wants is utility."

The strength and stubbornness of such ideas lie in the conviction—though of course not reasoned out or defined in the minds of the builders, or rather of their

customers—that usefulness is moral and beauty immoral. As with the masses the art instinct has departed, and with it the necessity for beauty, so now the power of understanding any reason for entertaining serious thought about this instinct has become extinct. One thing is certain: Puritanism and other influences have done their work so well in leaving us such mighty agents for ugliness in the persons of the “utilitarians,” that the great value existing in the feeling for beauty requires preaching most emphatically, strange though it may seem to have to insist on what Nature, if left to herself, preaches so eloquently through all hours and all seasons. The bluntness in seizing, for practical use, and for practical education, the truth that beauty is divine, is a difficulty by no means confined to the middle-class stamp of mind. Many leading intellects are wanting in that harmony, that completing of their whole nature which the culture of the beautiful in life, as well as in art, goes so far to produce. It is an element in the mind like the presence of a child in a house. Its influence rounds off the whole, and, by connecting seemingly discordant elements, tunes the mind to a sense of completeness, and tends to impress on us those wider harmonies in nature which are links between our restricted human powers and the infinite.

How is this value of beauty to be preached? How are those devoid of the instinct and sense of it to be converted? It may be argued that if we remain still an unartistic nation it is not for want of artists, decorators, exhibitions, and writing on art, all of which abound in such profusion. Modern life among the rich seems to have gone mad about art. Perhaps it is this very fussiness which proves how superficial the

interest is. It is when the reality of a taste goes that *dilettantism* creeps in.

Setting aside the class which, if it likes, can pass its life in play, can it be said truly that our present art has any real place in the serious interests of society? has it a respectable *raison d'être* in the world? We fear not; we fear society may be said at present to flirt only with Art, not to marry her, not to knit her into the earnest, real duties of everyday life; consequently society neither expects from Art an elevating help in education, nor looks to her for anything more than for a passing amusement. A jar is felt by those who really love Art by the attitude society takes with regard to her. There is a want of true sensitiveness as to the high position she is capable of taking. Society is not strung with the finest fibres with regard to her. It is strange there should be this coarseness of fibre and want of earnest study of the things we learn through the eye when there is so much delicacy and subtlety in the study of thought. It is a suggestive fact that we, as a nation, have our minds educated, but not our eyes. We can think, but we cannot see. Nations who can hardly think at all can see much better than we do, and produce without effort beautiful things in art which, with all our labour and training and academical knowledge, we cannot rival, always excepting the work of our few great men.¹

Another curious fact about Art is the separateness

¹ Perhaps the work which approaches in charm nearest to what we have called the *artless art* is found in Mr. Walter Crane's genius, and shown most distinctly in his children's picture-books, which every nursery and school-room ought to possess.

of her position in England, the way she seems to be only really alive in a clique—this, considering with what labour she is followed by the few whose vocation, and the many whose trade she is. To most of the public, who “do” the Academy and the “Grosvenor,” the operation, though a little less painful, is as separate from their real interests as a visit to the dentist would be. On the same principle that so much of the world keeps its religion for Sundays and has done with it when Sunday is over, most of the crowd in the galleries “does” its art there and nowhere else, the same relief being felt when church and art are disposed of, the difference being a greater courage in expressing dislike of pictures than dislike of church. Still, here are an ever-increasing number of men spending a most laborious life in the production of pictures and statues—men who are generally admitted to be up to the average in intellect and far above the average in sensibility ; and here is the public thinking it a duty to crowd to see the fruits of all this labour, and paying large prices to possess pictures. Undoubtedly art takes a serious position in the lives of a large number ; not so earnest or so fervent as in the days when it represented the religious feeling of nations, still far more engrossing than is warranted by the aimlessness of most of the results of this labour, a labour far more difficult than is supposed by the outsiders who know nothing and care less about it. The producing of even third-rate pictures and statues is so laborious an occupation that, though it may be thought dull by many artists themselves to consider the influence of art as a moral question, serious the world ought to be, or common sense says art ought not to engross so large a piece of

the world ; the production of it ought not to exist as the earnest occupation of any superior nature. Now whether or not it should be made more generally a serious interest, depends on the possibility of uniting the art feeling, that sensitive vibration of certain natures to beauty and power of creating a form for that beauty which is the true artist feeling, with the educating leading thought of the day. Unfortunately there seems a strange absence of sympathy between the rare but distinctly fine and subtle art instinct possessed by our few great painters and the intellectual thought of our time. They do not seem sufficiently in sympathy to be able in any way to educate one another. Artists go back to the past for their favourite literature, writers go back to the past for their theories on art—theories, for literary men, as a rule, have little else but theories on art. Many have a keen feeling for nature and a genuine delight in her landscape portraits, but that does not mean sympathy with art as art,—does not mean an understanding of the artist's creations, a sympathy with the genius that has created a form.

To any mind educated, even elementarily, in the best art instinct of our day, it is surprising to see how extremely wide of the mark are many of the criticisms of the general literary world on work which is the result of this creative faculty. Anything funnier than the various criticisms on the Grosvenor collection of last year can hardly be imagined. The very little thought or aim at understanding given to the criticism of works by great artists, the labour of months, even years, is surprising. There are critics who apparently think themselves qualified to dispose of the merits of

any kind of picture at a glance, or should they be of a discursive turn of mind will prefer to discourse on a theory of their own suggested by the picture rather than on any intention of the painter's. Mr. Watts's "Time and Death" was curiously handled in this way, though the subject was treated by the painter in such an obvious and simple manner. The art critic of one paper mistook "Time" for "Death," and thought it such a happy idea representing "Death" as young. The critic of another said Mr. Watts did not mean the picture to represent what he said it did, "Time and Death," but "Saturn and Rhea," and, finding some detail which did not carry out the "right" meaning, blamed Mr. Watts for not grasping his idea with more completeness.

There is something particularly exasperating in these days, when art of the highest character is so rare, to find even the brightest exceptions have, when exhibited in these public exhibitions, to endure being drawn through the mud of the flippant criticism which is too common. With very few exceptions, the art criticisms have not that ring which indicates any original instinct by which sympathy with the painter is awakened. Much even of the best writing on art has usually the stamp of special cliques and art friends about it, the flavour of mutual admiration societies, which ought to prevent such writing influencing any wide community. A literary man's judgment of a picture, if quite honest and original, must be tempered with extreme modesty, the moment he passes from the literary aspect of art to the more strictly artistic and technical qualities; for no judgment but that of a first-class artist himself could be taken as thoroughly satis-

factory in these matters. Conscious of this, perhaps, many an intelligent critic gets himself coached up in this part of his business by the artist, often by no means first-rate, for whom he has a bias, or one that mere chance has thrown in among his acquaintances. The result is, we get the not disinterested opinion of one or two artists on their own and other men's work in these criticisms, not spontaneous intellectual efforts suggested by the work judged. To anyone behind the scenes who has watched how these art criticisms are concocted and how the *littérateur's* opinion is formed, it is clear that both artists and the public should think little or nothing of the ordinary newspaper writing on art, for the very good reason that the writers very rarely discover anything for themselves. Unfortunately, the sensitive temperament of the artist makes it difficult for him to be quite indifferent whatever nonsense is written about his pictures, which, it must always be remembered, are like part of himself, are like his own children; and, however clearly he discerns the weakness and want of originality and knowledge in a criticism, he knows that a large portion of the world will look at his pictures, thinking the while, not how the pictures are really impressing them, but of what they have read from the supposed superior judgment of an art critic; and the public, as a rule, is so little capable of judging for itself, that it eagerly reads the art notices, wishing to know something about the pictures "before they go," too hurried and too lazy about art even to attempt to form an original opinion.

Perhaps the world has gone too far in another direction for Art again to appeal to the enthusiasm

and poetry of the masses, but certain it is she cannot recover any power of any kind over them as long as flippant or, at best, superficial newspaper criticisms are taken as guides in taste. Criticism as it exists has a cramping, unpleasant influence on the artist nature, and is a serious stumbling-block in the way of the development of the best art.

All the greatest work in art has the impress on it, not only of a healthy delight in the doing of it, but also of the existence of encouragement from admirers and sympathizers, a security felt on the part of the artist in the good understanding existing between himself and the spectators who are to enjoy his work ; in other words, a feeling that his work is accordant with the spirit of his times. But the strongest spirit of our times in external matters is such that no great art can be in accordance with it. Beauty is the goal of art ; the pride of life, the making money, and displaying the possession of it, is the most obvious goal of the external life of our times. All the Greek world and all the Italian world felt a triumph in possessing the fruits of the genius of their artists. Certainly there were no patronizing daily paper criticisms to take the edge off the triumph Phidias must have felt when the frieze and pediment of the Parthenon were finished ;—no sharp critic hits when Michael Angelo first showed his work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, or when Titian's "Assumption" first left his studio. Even the archaic work of Cimabue, now in the church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, was carried in triumph round the town, the whole population feeling pride and delight in possessing a painter who could do such things. But in those days the popular taste

loved beauty in external things, and people who knew nothing about art felt her influence enough not to think it due to their own cleverness to see the faults before the genius. Let us picture to our minds the conditions under which Michael Angelo decorated the Sistine Chapel, and then consider those under which St. Paul's is to be decorated—the greatness of the one event to the Roman world, and the comparative insignificance of the other to the London world. If a second Michael Angelo were born to paint St. Paul's, where would he find the sympathetic spirit appropriate for his work, from which to feed his inspiration? St. Paul's is part of an institution which the advanced minds of the time consider at best useful for the present only, to be gradually demolished when the light spreads, and which those who have still the warmest faith in the dogmas of Christianity think cold and unsatisfying. A Church which is merged in the political system of a country may be "safe," and not likely to commit spiritual extravagances, but it is hardly one which feeds imaginative art, or appreciates such work if by accident it crosses its way. Even Michael Angelo would have found it difficult, we think, to have created anything religiously impressive out of the spirit of the Church and State.

We must realize the truth of two important facts if we wish to understand and overcome the difficulties standing in the way of the existence of a great school of art, holding the same kind of position as those which flourished in Greece and Italy. The first is, that exhibitions of pictures and most of the criticisms written on them, produce conditions in art most destructive of high aim and intention, therefore de-

structive of what alone can be called high art, and secondly, that the art which is worth doing at all takes the best, in fact the whole of a specially gifted man's life and brain, and to appreciate his work we must take time and trouble, or remain contented to be in a position of not being able to judge. Even if time and trouble are taken, unless we are gifted with a specially fine taste for the arts, our criticism would be worthless as a guide to others. Our being highly educated and cultivated in other lines will not give us a love or a subtle appreciation of beauty, either in art or nature. An original fine taste is a rare gift, and, sad to say, the way the world goes seems diametrically opposed to the conditions for making it less rare. Intensity, patience, and harmony are ingredients which seem to be more and more left out of modern life. Life goes too quickly, and too separately, so to say, for there to be much of these qualities in it. There seems no time to pause and to be steeped by an impression. We have to unhinge our minds and hop off to something quite different before we have done much more than glance at a picture. We are continually in what Mr. Bagehot used to call the "kangaroo attitude of mind." To avoid utter confusion in the modern whirl and hurry, our occupations get mapped out in the day like the lessons at a school. Religion, if people have any so called, at one hour, business at a great many, society ditto, and "general culture," which includes visiting picture galleries at a few. There is often a merging in the two last by those whom art really wearies. One of the results of these conditions of modern life is, that by instinct the world, even the world who cares most for pictures, finds that the work

which can be best seized and enjoyed in this superficial way, is that in which superficial excellences are most obvious, thought and sentiment rather in the way. Moreover, artists find technical proficiency to be more remunerative used as an end than as a means.

This snare is affecting all art more or less, with the exception of a few great men who do not look to the walls of an exhibition to test the worth of their work. It partly consists in the undue effect which is obtained, in a mass of pictures put close together, of the mosaic-like manner of work, the frank putting down of one touch next another, and leaving it alone, however right or wrong the touch may be. This may be an unavoidable method of study in a school where the time given in which to paint in a model is very limited, and where really finely-finished complete painting is impossible, but it is a method which contains in it, we think, no worthy aim for a great school of art. It is bracing and has certain advantages in a certain stage of study, but it entirely excludes the possibility of rendering the highest subtlety of form, colour, or expression. By its incompleteness, perfection of quality in painting is out of the question. What is obtained is merely an exhibition of proficiency of eye and hand, an abstract rendering of Nature's facts without any feeling of revelling in the delight of her beauty. It ignores all the effects of transparency, of light flitting across and mystifying colour, of colour under the glow of diffused light—of all, in fact, that works the unrivalled charm of Giorgione or Titian: and along with this technical commonplace character of work we have the expressional commonplace conditions which seek

incidents of an unimpressive ordinary character, according well with the ready unpoetical aim of the handling.

Take a head painted by Giovanni Bellini and a head by any clever painter of the realistic school, and the difference is seen in perfection, resulting from distinct aims in work, the difference between a *riddle solved* and a *poem created*. In the riddle we have the difficulties of putting into right drawing the various curves and surfaces of a face on to a flat canvas, putting these moreover into right tone and colour in as few touches and in as unnecessarily short a time as possible, overcome often in a masterly way. In the poem we have delicate subtle perfect workmanship, lovely form sought after and steeped in exquisite colour, all used as a means to an end, made subservient to the longing to express what is most pure and elevating. Who cares to ask how many touches are in such work, how long such a picture took to paint? To leave behind him even one poem-picture, one beautiful utterance of such an artist's soul, would more than justify a great man's existence, such delight does it give to those who appreciate it.

In order to revive a great school we must work into our art the good side of our modern conditions. To be real, our art must be a development from our real life ; but if it is to be great art, and a powerful living influence, it must be developed from the earnest, highest life of our time, not from that side where amusement is the theory of life and weary emptiness the reality. But even those who admire the art which is in sympathy with such a superficial life cannot pretend that it produces any food for thought or emotion,

save that of admiration for technical skill—an admiration, be it remembered, which cannot fully be felt by any who are not aware of the technical difficulties of art, whereas a picture in which there is thought or feeling as well as beauty is interesting to all who have mind and sympathy with poetry, though quite ignorant of the process through which it is expressed. There is always a much wider difference between superficial interests and sympathies than between those which lie at the core of human things. All classes have the common interests of living and dying, loving and hating, feeling cheered by the sun and by beauty, depressed by darkness and ugliness; of wondering where we came from and where we are going to; and great poets and painters never forget that such are the important human interests, and give them the prominence in their work which they have in their own thought, shadowing the detail of passing incident with a secondary importance. The overcoming of technical difficulties, a display of professional skill, must for ever remain a very secondary interest to the public at large, the recalling and impressing ideas and feelings on subjects of common interest ever a first. It is a suggestive fact also that it is among the poet-painters alone we find the completest perfection in execution, so subtle is the connection between brain and hand; the more beauty of feeling there is in the one, the more power of expressing it unconsciously creeps into the other.

It might be interesting to those whom pictures affect to try and puzzle out what it is in a picture which makes it great—a real treasure to the world. It is not certainly because there is in it merely an imitation of

anything in nature, though Leonardo da Vinci's saying that the best painting is that which is most like the thing it attempts to represent might seem to imply it. But the greatness of his "Last Supper" and the "Vierge aux Rochers" lies in the impressive realization of a poetic nobility felt by Leonardo. The wonderful Christ-Child in the "Vierge aux Rochers" is very like what he intended to paint, but it was no child he saw with his eye only, it was a vision in his brain, a vision which arose out of the emotions caused by the beautiful story. No painter ever became a great artist merely because he painted things exactly as he saw them from an external view. Pigments, however cleverly arranged and handled so as to imitate nature, must ever remain inadequate to express anything like her beauty, and cannot be a real gain to the treasures of the world unless they also translate the sensibility of a superior human mind and feeling. Nature, being the large-handed, generous creature she is, seems to fling her most beautiful effects apparently with little method and with reckless squandering. She seems to require a translator to accentuate them and make them appreciated, and this she supplies by the gift of the artist instinct, which not only seizes the beauty, but detaches it and incloses it, so that an impressive, simplified, and unchangeable form for it is created. It is that power of putting into a form, that power of selection and rendering of nature's beauties, the special artist's genius which puts him, as Socrates says, in the first rank; he is a creator. It is all nature's work, the beauty and the artist-gift of reproducing the beauty—as Polixenes says in the "Winter's Tale" when Perdita objects to the streaked gillyflowers

because art has had to do with their creation as well as nature.

"Perdita. For I have heard it said,
There is an art which in their piedness shares
With great creating nature.

Polixenes. Say there be ;
Yet nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean ; so o'er that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes."

We believe the conditions of modern life unconsciously destroy much of the art that nature makes in the form of the creative faculty, as well as that beauty of landscape which the monstrosities of modern structures deform. Modern life ignores the peculiar sensibilities of the creative faculty, and has little sympathy for that quality of the artist nature which vibrates with a sense of awe and wonder to nature's beauties, which might be called the miracles of the artist's religion. As Wordsworth describes the lover of nature, he is

"Wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion."

Modern life is so grown up, so knowing, so efficient and practical, so far away from the beautiful, happy, wondering attitude of childhood, that, as a rule, it cannot sympathize with the artist nature which has so much of the child in it ; a child, but of a bigger, more Godlike race—

"Though sensitive, yet in their weakest part
Heroically fashioned."

We may laugh at the Freshwater builder, but most

of us, more or less, live our lives practically to his tune : "Trees is ornaments ; what we wants is utility."

The ordinary talent, which can fit into utilitarian ideas, which can be used up in manufacture and in the painting of portraits of people, and landscapes which are valuable for the sake of likeness, has an education provided for it by the schools of art and design spread all over the country ; and a market in the many who, not caring for art as art, care for representations of themselves, their belongings, and their favourite views : but we fail to see any education or market for the art which is the outcome of genius, and we must remember that the results of the rightly developed life of one genius will do more real good to the true interests of art than the results of a hundred schools which develop mere talent. Those who congratulate the present day on its art advantages might answer : "But what can a student want more than the British Museum and the National Gallery in order to develop his higher genius?—the British Museum, where Phidias teaches the glories of form ; and the National Gallery, where Titian teaches the glories of colour." We think this answer would be conclusive only to the amateur. These standards of rarest excellence are helpful as standards to the last degree. But their perfection is very high above and beyond the student-genius of our day. The power of Phidias was the culmination of a line of sculptor ancestors imbued with great art feeling and religious feelings, though the religion was pagan. Titian's power was the culmination of a line of painter ancestors imbued in like manner with the noblest feeling art is capable of inspiring. Both were en-

couraged by living fellow-workers of the same calibre as themselves. High art took a high place in the world. A first importance was given to it by the governments of the countries in which these artists worked, and every incentive that could encourage genius to do its best. Unsurpassed excellence was the result. "There were giants in those days." Surely we make a great mistake if we think we are giving ample opportunities by our art education for the reproduction of giants, excellent though this education may be for the production of artists who have no intention of trying even to be giants.

High art not being the result of an exact copy of nature, still less an exact copy of the antique, what is there of teaching in the three principal schools in London—the Academy, South Kensington, or the Slade Schools—which even attempts a higher teaching? The student who possesses genius, his brain fertile in invention, his feelings keenly sensitive to all natural beauty, wants a manner of work, a form of expression to do justice to both. He appreciates the achievements of Phidias and Titian, but does not know the road which has led them to such perfection; not that he wants to imitate either Phidias or Titian, Raphael or Botticelli, even could he do so successfully, for he who imitates must always walk behind, but he wants help in working out his gift; he wants his sensibilities directed towards the noblest in art and nature, otherwise he may lose many years in learning to discriminate, and lose precious time on unremunerative work; whereas the student of the present day, leaving the public schools of art, has generally to look on study, as study, finished, and has to direct his whole atten-

tion to the fact that to make a livelihood is very difficult ; that imperfect works of high aim do not, as a rule, sell ; that without a name even very excellent work is not bought ; and that, to get a name, his work must be exhibited at the Academy, the Grosvenor Gallery, or at other exhibitions—moreover, look well there, and attract attention. No student without a private fortune can work on the slow principles of the “Old Masters” without help or without the further difficulties of money worries. No ; he must devote himself to the production of work which will not take long, and yet will “tell out” from other pictures crowded about it. If he is very clever, he soon acquires a name for a certain trick of picture ; his fortune is made, and he is considered successful. But success is not greatness. The more successes we have of this kind the less success, as an educating power, art will have in the nation ; for the art that costs little in the production cannot really benefit in the long run. It destroys the taste of the artist, and gives no standard of excellence to the public. We have a few great artists in England who have steadily and most persistently refused to degrade their genius by working for any motive whatsoever but the highest intention of their art instinct, seeing in its perfecting their right calling. We do not accuse these painters of possessing any extra amount of the sense of duty, for that might mislead ; but it appears they possess the true art instinct, for obviously it is an imperative necessity of their natures to use mind, hand, and eye so that their genius may have its say. The position these artists hold shows that greatness is practically recognized, notwithstanding the vast amount of mud which ignor-

ance is allowed to throw at it through the medium of hasty criticism.

It would be no easy or small help to ask of great artists to start a school of student-helpers, though such a plan might prove of value, after the first effort, to the master, as well as of every importance to the student. No great painter is able to carry out half his designs himself ; but, for a pupil to be of any real help even in the least prominent parts of the work, he requires special training and sympathy in the master's manner of work. In addition to this would arise the difficulty that when the student became a real help he would be ready and anxious to start work of his own. Having relays of students always wanting the same preparation before becoming of any real service, and then wishing to use their experience and knowledge on their own works instead of on the master's would be a labour no great artist could undertake without injury to his own work, and therefore the worst injury to the interests of art in general. Such a plan might be made to work satisfactorily, perhaps, on a larger scale than has ever been tried in England, where a tradition of the manner of the master would be passed on from the elder to the younger students ; at any rate, of first importance for such a scheme to succeed, would be to make it certain that the pupil's work carried out, instead of interrupting, the master's. Still the money difficulty would exist.

In these days of advanced culture, could not something like an art company be formed composed of our first artists and the enlightened Cræsus who seem anxious to help art along with other good work ; also all true lovers of art whose moral feeling does not rest

satisfied in spending money merely to become themselves the possessors of beautiful works of art? The artists could help by their genius and knowledge, and the Crœsuses by their money and influence, towards the production of great public works of art, apprenticing struggling students of genius to the company for so many years, in this way helping individual talent and doing something towards beautifying modern external life. That there is no way in which money can be more satisfactorily spent than in making men live the best lives they are capable of living, is acknowledged by all advanced philanthropists; but when it is spent to enable genius to develop itself, the help becomes one which spreads wide for the social good not only of the present, but of the future. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Works on a great scale might, we think, by means of such a company, be produced which, for lack of time and means, remain for ever dreams in the imagination of poet-painters; and it is works on a great scale, works of high and noble intention, decorating places belonging to or used by the public, and these alone, which can rightly influence the masses, and become inspiring to the latent art instincts of nations; works which would harmonize the dwellings of men with the beauties of nature, carrying out, it would seem, the intention nature had when she created the artist gift. Men living in cities, as well as in the country, ought to have that rest and contentment in gazing on external objects which beauty inspires. They surely ought not, for the best healthiness of their condition, to be obliged continually to resort to the effort of thought in order to elevate their mood. Artists might have,

we think, a very decided mission in the advanced education of our time, if they realized the seriousness of such a mission.¹

Never, it would seem, was there a time when life required the rounding harmonious influence of beauty more. It is a want which, though the cause is not consciously realized, becomes a morbid pain in many intellectual natures. As dogmatic religion slips more and more from under their hold, there is often a dry emptiness left in that part of the soul which faith has deserted and which no excitement can satisfy.

Some turn to the beauty in an abstract idea, the beauty in the triumph of a moral endurance and an unselfish devotion, an exercise of the emotion of pity to allay that necessity which exists in their nature for beauty of some kind. "George Eliot" describes, as she alone can, how that painful life of mental doubt falls back and takes refuge in the simplest acts which allay the sufferings of the sick, where a ground of sympathy for needs common to all humanity can

¹ Wordsworth, in his sonnet to Haydon, says :

"High is our calling, friend ; creative art
(Whether the instrument of words she use
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues)
Demands the service of a mind and heart
Though sensitive, yet in their weakest part
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert,
And oh ! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness,
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard !"

always be found ; and doubtless there can be no more practical or worthy result of "honest doubt" and that humiliation which in honest natures results from moral and mental confusion. But to weep with the side of nature which weeps, and not to rejoice with the beauty of nature that rejoices, is an asceticism which is contrary, we think, to the obvious intentions of nature, and lands us on a shore barren of the pure delights which our senses were created to enjoy.

The world wants educating in the beautiful—for we have thwarted the instinct for beauty which, from savages upwards, all healthy human nature was meant to possess ; we have thwarted it by the faults of our civilization, by allowing ourselves to become over-greedy, unreal, ever seeking for effect to appear different from what we are—thwarted it by being too indolent to be original, too ambitious to be simple, too careless to be discriminating. Having lost the instinct through our weaknesses, the question is, can we revive it out of the virtues of our modern civilization, out of the honest desire for intellectual and moral truth, out of the intense interest in natural science, out of the subtlety of the best critical instinct, out of the purity of our finest literary and poetic taste ? Is there enough latent religious feeling, amidst all the dreary materialism in which so much of the world seems soaked, to nurture a great school of art—enough to counterbalance and get the better of the vulgarities of the time ? Of the refining of luxury we have so much we are apt to mistake its results for those of the soul, putting them on the altar of "good taste" and worshipping them. There is such a straining to be clever, many brains are toppled over before their real work in the world

begins ; such a straining to be muscular and strong, many bodies are maimed by an excess in athletics before they are even fully grown. Surely all this grotesque exaggeration means that there is some serious element left out, which, if brought into the scheme of education, would keep this wildness in better order, give to it a tone of better breeding, more balance, and more dignity ; to every developing power its right place, but no more. With all our modern excitement of excess, happiness is not the state which the hardest livers, either in the intellectual or physical line, seem, by their own account, to have attained. The ways of the world tend to what is physically and morally ugly ; the modern mind, as a rule, is wanting in that attitude of awe and reverence, inseparable from the appreciation of beauty, and is therefore unconnected by any religious fervour with what in nature is inspired and supernatural. The souls of the masses, as well as of the highly cultured and intellectual, have very real requirements, and these requirements ought to be acknowledged and provided for by the thought of the advanced classes. It is these requirements which have found in former ages expression in the highest art. One fact about Art is distinctly proved in her history—all really great schools of art have been inspired by religion. The Greeks abstracted from nature a feeling which they could humanize, and out of the streams and clouds, trees and mountains, made men and women, forms which they deified with a spirit inspired by nature. The early Italians out of men and women made Christs and angels, Madonnas and saints ; the Italians of the Renaissance, taking partly the text of the Christian and partly the form of the Greek,

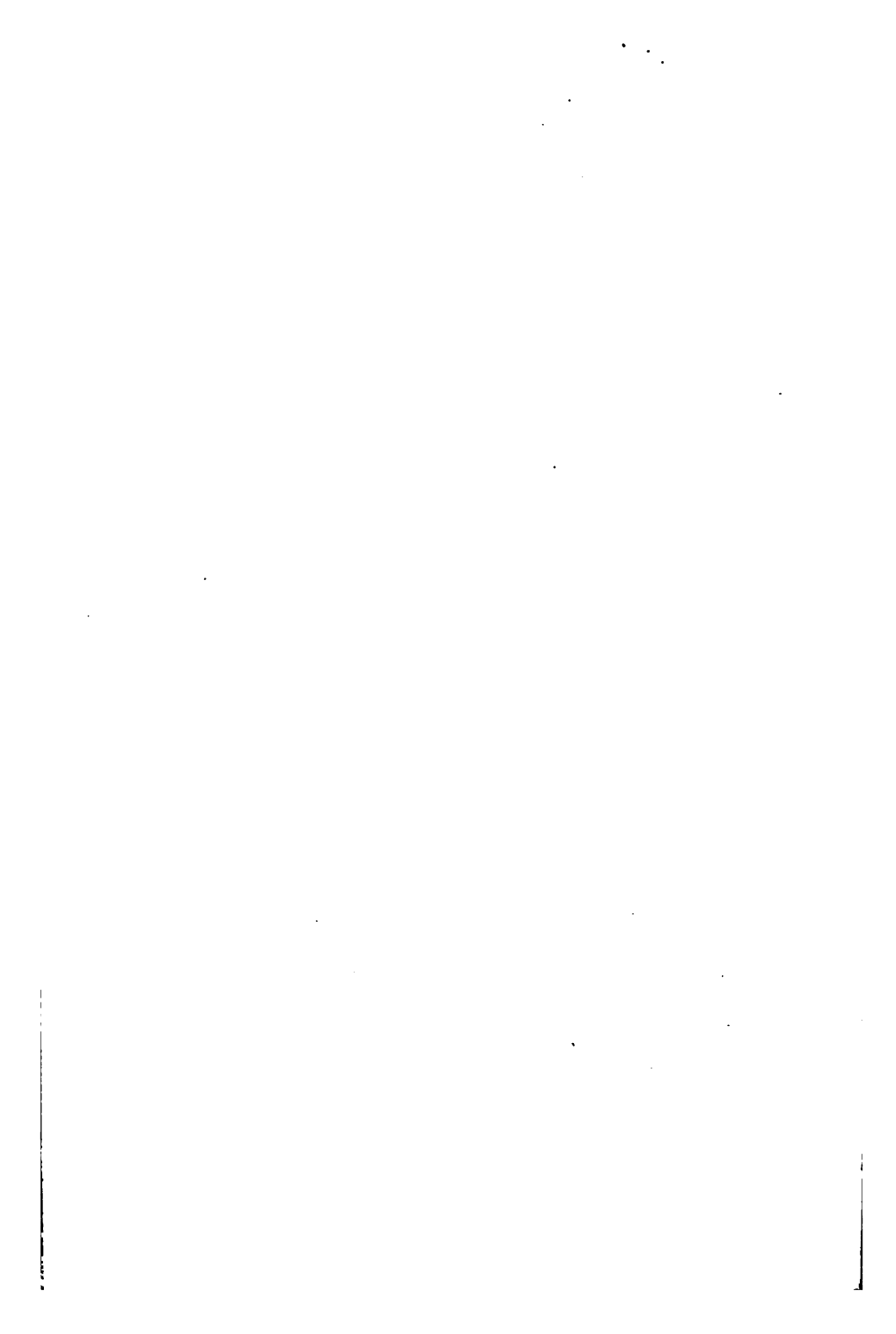
threw the passions of humanity into a blaze of colour and an almost violent movement of action. These gloried in a vividness, an unrestrained generosity of beauty, which, like the rich blaze of an autumn garden under the glow of an October sunset, a glow richer and fuller than all the summer suns could cast on it, but the glow which precedes the night of killing frost, flamed up and then vanished, leaving art no longer an important power in the world. Is there any hope of reviving that power? Can we, through the feeling for nature which certainly exists, though in a minority, and of which feeling Wordsworth and Ruskin are our prophets ;—through the expressional side of human form which a few of our artists are able to depict, and which in literature finds expression pre-eminently in the writings of "George Eliot," convey some of the subtler thought and moral fervour of our own special religious feeling into art, reviving her power and placing her again among the first of human interests?

Clearly, if we rest content with the art which is but a second-hand feeling, a replica of the expression of dogmas we no longer hold as vital truths ; if we are content to sink into the expression of mere realistic effects, giving to our own proficiency that reverence which religious minds give to the creations of a superior power ; above all, if we are content to remain indiscriminate and careless in our judgment of the rare but really great art which is being produced in our day, it is hopeless, and we must also rest content with a very secondary position for the art of our times. With so much increasing interest and energy in art matters, there ought, however, to be found a possibility of drawing the moral and intellectual vein pre-

eminent in our best literature into sympathy with the artist instinct.

Somewhere there is a link missing. We are afraid it must be admitted as a fact that the majority of our prominent artists do not live in the highest thought of our day, and that the highest thought seems often strangely blunt with regard to the poetry of form and colour. That the world would be the better for learning the lessons which beauty can teach through the best art, and that this is a time when such lessons are especially needed in education, must be the belief of all who feel acutely the close relation in feeling existing between what is best in all religions, and what is greatest in all art.

WHY IS MR. MILLAIS OUR
POPULAR PAINTER?



WHY IS MR. MILLAIS OUR POPULAR PAINTER?

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"All great art is delicate art, and all coarse art is bad art. Nay, even to a certain extent all *bold* art is bad art; for boldness is not the proper word to apply to the courage and swiftness of a great master, based on knowledge, and coupled with fear and love. The last characteristic of great art is that it must be inventive, that is, be produced by the imagination. In this respect, it must precisely fulfil the definition already given of poetry; and not only present grounds for noble emotion, but furnish these grounds by *imaginative power*. Hence there is at once a great bar fixed between the two schools of Lower and Higher Art. The lower merely copies what is set before it, whether in portrait, landscape, or still-life; the higher either entirely imagines its subject, or arranges the materials presented to it, so as to manifest the imaginative power."—JOHN RUSKIN, *Modern Painters*.

IT is supposed no one will deny the presumption that Mr. Millais is our most popular painter. Arguments of a very convincing and practical kind are not wanting in order to prove that he is. Mr. Millais' art has struck a genuine vein of admiration in the popular taste as well as in the more cultured taste of many of his fellow-artists. Consequently he has had showered on him the benefits arising from popularity with a

great liberality. In seeking the reason and trying to analyze the cause of such popularity it will be the object in the present case to find out, if possible, how the power and influence caused by such popularity as Mr. Millais enjoys affect the interests of our English schools of art. Is such a power advantageous or disadvantageous to the interests of that culture of the fine arts which is supposed to elevate and ennoble, and which certainly has been a prominent and refining influence in education in civilized communities of the past?

Mr. Millais undoubtedly possesses that rare and unteachable power, the result alone produced by what is called genius. He is a born painter, and very great as a painter; he has a splendid accuracy of eye, and the true sensibility for form and colour which is nature's gift to a born painter. Beginning in earliest childhood, such a sensibility for form and colour amasses experiences, which weave themselves like instincts into the very nature of the happy possessor, and become unconsciously sources of power to the artist, placing his work at once beyond—indeed at an unreachable distance beyond—the work which is the result of laboured study and of a slower development of sensibility. Foolish indeed would it be to underrate the qualities which are the result of genius such as Mr. Millais possesses. It is not enough to say such qualities are most difficult to obtain; they are impossible, save where nature has bestowed very rare and admirable gifts. Nature has given him the gift of seeing the outward aspect of things so vividly and so truly that the translation he makes in paint cannot but fail to strike the eye of the most ordinary spectator

as a forcible truthful likeness of the reality. He has also a power of building up, so to speak, the form in paint with an appearance of structural solidity, and reducing such form to the somewhat abstract conditions necessary to its rendering on the flat surface of a canvas with an appearance of most striking truth and reality. He represents in tone and colour very recognizably the effect of atmosphere surrounding the form, playing in and about the objects in his pictures, producing a palpitating breathing quality, which is one of the rarest excellences to be found in painting. The force with which he carries out his genius makes it popular, easily recognized, easily understood. Moreover, the fact that Mr. Millais' art is not abstract in its character, in itself tends to making it popular. It does not deal with ideas, it deals with facts, and facts are what the English mind prefers in its art to ideas. Even in his story-pictures he makes portraits of emotions, but makes no soliloquy of his own on those emotions. He vividly represents the aspect of a person under the influence of emotion, but supplements it with no suggestions which are not contained in its outward appearance at a given moment. The result is that the expression in his work is easily grasped, enthusiasm is quickly kindled, the charm of it works at once, leaving no puzzling unsatisfied doubts in our minds as to whether we have, or have not, appreciated the full merits and meaning of his art. Mr. Millais tells a story in a picture with happy directness, he tells it just as a story should be told in paint. He appeals delightfully to the popular love of the emotioned element in art, without ever exaggerating the dramatic element beyond the limits it should hold in a picture.

With one exception Mr. Millais has never seemed wrong in his treatment of sentiment. He often leaves sentiment out of the scheme of his work altogether, but only in the case of the "Children in the Tower" is it believed he has given us forced, unreal, artificial sentiment.

Mr. Millais' art is also very national in its character, very English. It is marked most distinctly with the stamp of one side of the characteristics of our national temperament. It is evident that any very strong work must have in it a national distinctiveness. Art feeling which has been chiefly fed and developed by the influence of foreign work must more or less be a usurped feeling, not distinctly in the born grain of the nature adopting it. It has not been steeped into the nature from earliest childhood, and therefore is not so rich in individuality; it does not emanate so freely from the deeper sources of association as does the genius which is nurtured by the painter's own national sympathy and training. Perhaps the most beautiful side of the English national taste is its genuine preference for what is pure in feeling, and for all sentiments capable of being expressed with a candid open truthfulness. Anything which in sentiment is subtle, mysterious, or half hidden, the popular taste does not understand and mistrusts. The feeling in Mr. Millais' art is invariably pure, transparent, and thoroughly healthy; and doubtless such qualities greatly enhance the worth of the tenderness, and deepen the pathos, of his painted stories, and contrast refreshingly with the garish terrors and unpleasant suggestions so salient in art which is patronized by French taste. Very English, too, is the straightforward impression Mr. Millais'

work gives. It seems done without, perhaps, any desire to dive deep or rise high, only to push forward ; and however good, bad, or indifferent, carries with it an air of self-confident cheerfulness and satisfaction ; possessing, above all, the quality of qualities which is the most successful in these times, namely, *efficiency*. Mr. Millais' manner of work seems by self-assertion and a frank audacity to make up the mind of the spectator for him as to its merit. It seems so sure of itself it must be right, is an unspoken argument which influences many judgments. Another popular element in Mr. Millais' art lies in the non-academical style of his work. His merits and his shortcomings are all his own. His art is thoroughly unconventional, and though often influenced by other strong individualities, he follows no code of laws, and is restrained by no trammels of precedent. In painting, his eye is his best teacher, his instinct is his safest law. The English popular taste, guided by its innate love of freedom, resents the formal restraints of academical teaching in all lines of culture, and willingly sacrifices the laws of established rules for the charms of individuality and originality either in literature or art. There is much to be said as to the value of academical standards, but assuredly in England popularity is in a measure gained by resisting the formal restrictions necessitated by following academical rules and standards. Certainly the freshness and charm of Mr. Millais' genius could have gained nothing, and might perhaps have lost much, had it been subjected to the influence of a more theoretic and academical training. His art as art might have been more complete in its character, but his pictures would have been less striking.

He might have had a foot on the steps of a higher ladder, but he would not have stood out so prominently on the top of his own. Probably one of the causes why completeness and a sense of balance are elements which may be left out as prominent in the English art of the present day without its popularity suffering, is that the class that possesses inherited refinement of taste and the traditions of culture have from various causes ceased to make collections of modern pictures. The aristocracy has ceased to patronize art except in the line of portraiture. Though many of the collectors of modern pictures have, as individuals, more refined and cultured taste in art than any class as a whole, still there are many belonging to the middle class who buy pictures not so much from a sympathy with art as from a desire to educate their taste up to the level of another class, or as a safe means of investing their money. Certain it is that native fine taste is a rare gift in any class, and that since art for her sins has recently become the fashion, there are many more people anxious and able to buy pictures than there are people who can finely discriminate as to the worth of those in the market. Many therefore allow their taste to be led by the interest of dealers and others, who look naturally upon art solely from a mercantile point of view. The quality of *distinction*, a quality as a rule most often, though by no means invariably, found in the aristocratic class, depends very necessarily on the elements of balance and completeness ; but distinction is not a quality which the popular taste of the present day insists on in its art. The highest excellence in art, as indeed in every other human effort, lies obviously in the perfect balance of necessary and important quali-

ties. Many feel a distinct shortcoming in all Mr. Millais' works of those qualities which are most distinctly the result of an intellectual effort. For this reason, though great as a painter, he cannot be said to be equally great as an artist. In many important qualities it is believed Mr. Millais' painting will always hold its own with the best of all times. His dexterity in producing a real effect, the result of his splendid accuracy of eye, his sentiment for the true and real aspect of a thing at a given moment, are powers which have probably never been surpassed. Still, his genius is not of a kind to be compared with that of the great *artists* of the past.

Mr. Millais' art, as far as it attacks our imagination at all, attacks it through an impression of reality. Now if this impression were always as profound as it is striking, if with the reality we felt the weight of an intellectual power, as well as the painter's instinct translating truly the outward aspect of nature in art ; if the impression of reality comprised the inner as well as the outer man—and in the case of some of his story pictures this is the case—we could not have our imaginations attacked in a healthier manner. But in too many of Mr. Millais' pictures no attempt even is made to do more than give us the true aspect of the bare outside of the husk. The emotional qualities sometimes, and the painter's instincts nearly always, are striking and prominent ; but never those which prove power of reflection, or power of grasping suggestions in nature which are not very obvious facts. Hence the absence in his pictures of that completeness, of that grave serenity and dignity, which the noblest art possesses ; also of that refinement and dis-

inction which elevate and ennoble us through the influence which all the worthiest beauty possesses. Mr. Millais' art is not reflective work, nor does the popular taste criticise in a reflective mood its favourite art. Public praise or public blame may not influence the work of the strongest men ; but criticism, as Mr. Matthew Arnold puts it, ought to tend "to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself." It is to be feared Mr. Millais' genius has, on the contrary, unprofitably availed itself of the very unintellectual situation which modern popular taste has created in matters of art.

We English, as a rule, do not seem to be very precise in our reasoning faculties. We have the habit of vaguely blurring our judgments by preferences and prejudices. We are lazy in adapting our intellectual focus to different classes of subjects. We apply arguments, which are suitable to one class of subject only, to every subject. At the present moment popular taste seems to overrate in art, qualities which may be of first-rate importance in the ordinary business of life, but which are obviously quite of second importance in art. Efficiency of a ready kind is more popular than power of a slower, more profound nature. In the mere movement of life such ready efficiency becomes very valuable. When the day is mapped out so that every minute is occupied, and as little time wasted in friction as is possible, this power of "go," of living in the minute, and doing the most in each minute, becomes a very valuable power in business lives. But to be always *busy* is the last condition favourable to the right development of the imagination, or the higher and finer sensibilities ; in other

words, to the moving of the whole human machine when at its best ; and great art has only been produced by such a moving of the whole nature. Obviously great artists hold their high position among the great, not only because of their genius as artists, but because their native mental atmosphere is one of rare refinement and comprehensiveness. They translate the facts of life in a form true to a wider, higher interpretation than that which an ordinary nature perceives without such a translation. Distinctly the vocation of high art, poetry in writing or painting or sculpture, is to transmit beauty of ideas, beauty of nature's facts, beauty of every kind, into the duller, more deadened atmosphere of commonplace life. Efficiency is a good agent in carrying on ordinary business in this ordinary life which is necessary to be led by most of us in the struggle for material wants ; but it is not the power which is of first importance, or fits in best with the most reasonable aims of art. And yet it is this quality of efficiency which is the real cause of the striking effect produced by the realistic painting now in fashion. In the work of the greatest artists we feel not so much a suggestion of personal power as that these great artists breathed in freer surroundings and in a larger mental atmosphere. There is nothing corresponding to provincialism, narrowness of sect, class, or prejudice in their work. We feel that their whole natures are tuned to the completeness and perfection which echoes back the big laws of nature, stamped with the individuality of the finest of nature's creations, the human body, mind, and spirit, at its best. Such a tuning necessarily embraces the imagination and all that part of human nature, whether we

call it religion or poetry, which has in it feelers out towards something beyond and more powerful than the tangible. Art cannot be complete if the nature creating it is not made in a mould large enough to embrace this side of human nature, however apt the instincts which lead to perfect imitation of the outward aspect may be. It is this finest fibre of the human make which is found stamping the works of the greatest masters with a distinct value for all times. And this finest fibre, as developed in art, is truly sensitive to the elements of completeness and balance. It is comparatively easy to prove the quality of balance in the material objects about us, and in the technical qualities in art ; but when it is carried into the region of sensation, thought, and emotion, it becomes a more subtle question. But the province of the fine arts is distinctly to deal with the finer sensations, with thought and emotion of an immaterial kind ; and if the right balance is not kept in those qualities which suggest the noblest impressions, if the power of the mind does not overrule the power of hand and eye, and the spirit does not overrule the mind in art as in the lives of men, surely such art cannot be the most useful, the worthiest, or the healthiest translation of the artist nature. As Mr. Ruskin says : " Thoroughly perfect art proceeds from the heart, which involves all the noble emotions, associates with these the head, yet as inferior to the heart, and the hand, yet as inferior to the heart and head, and thus brings out the whole man."

No part of nature can be completely expressed by the artist if he look at it from the point of view of its physical nature only, its definite side alone. The exact

sciences, however, are those which the modern mind leans to with most sympathy, and hence there is a tendency to exaggerate the value of definite qualities in every line. But in what we call fine art, common sense ought surely to demand an influence quite different from that which would be useful from the study of science. Let us be as definite as we can in those matters which are useful in life only when they are definite and exact, but do not let us limit our sources of culture by sympathizing only with what is definite and exact, or we shall be shutting our eyes to one of nature's most obvious laws, the law of mystery. No art which confines itself to the aspect which an object takes to the eye only can have in it the *poet's truth*, a truth which, however vaguely expressed, touches the spring of the whole machine. Nature evidently meant there should be loose ends in mind as well as in matter. She does not tidy up the highest powers of imagination into a definite and precise knowledge according to human codes of law, any more than she tidies up the clouds into geometrical shapes, or the mountain peaks into pyramids, which will measure right according to human calculations or plans. Nature's laws include those of movement, variety, and mystery; and the poet, be he painter or writer, catches his inspiration in the atmosphere of nature's complete laws, not in the atmosphere of those made by human creatures for human convenience.

Powerful realistic art can only be produced under certain very definite restricted conditions. The model must be steadily fixed for some hours together in an unchanging aspect before the artist, however rapidly he may work, gets into his work that exact likeness,

and the precise details which gives to such painting a striking look of realism. The art which seeks to put into a form an impression, an inspiration, works from a *mental vision*. So strong is the impression, so complete the inspiration of such Titans as Pheidias, Titian, and Turner, that the exactness with which essential truths are seized by such a mental vision as these were evidently possessed of, is greater than the exactness of most of those artists who imitate nature for the sake of the realistic qualities only. Modern art has developed its own special kind of realism, and Mr. Millais has, in some of his finest works, blended such realism with poetry and pure sentiment in a most delightful and original manner. It is not the realism which we find in such works as "The Huguenots," "The North-West Passage," "Effie Dean," that we should ever wish to depreciate; it is the idea, an idea which emanates chiefly from foreign schools of painting, but which has most destructively affected our own English school, that it is a worthy aim for an artist to treat realism as an end in itself, instead of a means of expression. It is the overbalancing all other aims in art by the desire of producing the effect of reality, which ends by blunting the artist's instincts towards the finest quality in nature's laws, that of perfect balance; for by such an over-balancing many modern realists defeat their own aim. In art as in other matters it is obvious that the exaggeration in one direction will end by destroying the virtue of those very qualities for which others are sacrificed.

That which merely the eye sees without reference either to association, thought, or emotion, can never completely satisfy any civilized human being whose

culture embraces the thoughts and history of a past, and the aspirations towards a future. The English popular taste has never demanded the intellectual element in art, so what we believe to be the short coming inherent in Mr. Millais' genius has not stood in the way of his popularity. But it is to be doubted whether his popularity would ever have become really great and stable, had he in his less recent work left out emotional sentiment. No one can justly say there is a want of "heart" in Mr. Millais' genius, however little he may choose to put into some of his later works ; and his dexterity, as a painter, proves the power of his hand. Perhaps it may be in Mr. Millais' case more precise to call the third ingredient the eye, for it may be doubted whether he has much native facility of touch. As a servant to his eye, which is splendidly accurate, his hand works with touches of almost unrivalled force ; but that instinctive touch, the result of the whole nature being permeated with a sense of beauty, which unconsciously flies over the canvas, leaving in its track always some suggestion of beauty, as in the sketches by Reynolds, such a facility of touch we do not find in Mr. Millais' painting. If he hurries he smears, if he generalizes he daubs ; still, when he means an effect should come, however much time and labour it may cost him, the hand can carry out the effect. The real shortcoming is in the intermediate ingredient. Mr. Millais seems to have become more and more callous to the value of the intellectual quality in art. The world in general has of late years become more and more callous as to its value. Mr. Millais has probably influenced the public taste by giving it fascinating work which has so little thought in it, and

the public taste has probably influenced Mr. Millais by being so enthusiastically delighted with such art.

Unfortunately, the intellectual quality has become confounded with a theoretic view prevalent only when art as art is not really alive. The present artistic world which has awoke to a real living existence, or at all events to the desire for such an existence, with the usual exaggeration of fashion, clamours for the purely artistic qualities in contradistinction to the theory of art, minus the instinct. To the minds of many modern æsthetics an aim in a picture, the appreciation of which necessitates sympathy from an intellectual point of view, is a fault. Surely this is a peculiarly fantastic kind of affectation. None of us, even if we wished, could return, with the genuine delight which would satisfy our complete demands for beauty in art, to the purely decorative arrangements which satisfy the demands of savages. We have inheritances from the past which leave us weighted with more complicated sensibilities; such complicated sensibilities require the stimulus of a more serious and exciting interest than that which nations are satisfied with in their childhood. We cannot be truly and entirely ourselves if we limit our demands to a purely decorative feeling in art. At the same time it would imply an absence of genuine artistic sensibility were we to demand food to be given to our minds by art through the same process by which literature can feed us. Written poetry is conveyed to the mind first through the ear, but it is through the medium of ideas it touches the spiritual and emotional side of our nature. The poetry expressed by painting and sculpture is conveyed to the spiritual and emotional part of

our natures without any conscious intellectual effort. It is not through ideas we seize the virtue of her poetry; the emotion follows immediately on the perception without the intermediate stage of conscious thought. But nevertheless the mission of the greatest art does not stop here. Really great art does more than arouse the emotion of delight in pleasant line and colour. By its perfect balance, serenity, and nobility, it awakens in us a sense of the value of *perfection*—perfection not only in the beauty of outward aspect, but in the beauty of the noblest sensibilities; it satisfies the highest part of human nature—a craving for the ideal; it starts the mind by its suggestiveness to a completer view of human conditions than that which everyday commonplace life affords. The highest use of art is to afford a standard of complete perfection; and to effect this mission, as Mr. Ruskin says, “thoroughly perfect art must bring out the whole man.”

It is not meant that in order that the arts of painting and sculpture should create a standard of perfection, the intellectual quality, though present, must stand in any degree in the stead of instinctive genius, the instinctive genius which catches the core of truth in the aspect of visible things with a peremptory exactness. Such instinctive genius had those early Egyptians, who, working a thousand years before the *Iliad* was written, in spite of an absence, as far as we know, of any knowledge of the science of drawing, or inherited art training, possessed a power of producing a true likeness in outline of everything they saw. Such instinctive art genius have the Japanese, whose natural sense of colour and drawing produces beautiful imita-

tions of flowers, animals, birds, fish, etc., apparently as easily as we write the most ordinary statement of a fact in the letters of our own language. The use of such art instinct as that possessed by the Egyptians and the Japanese has been to state facts in order to record the history of their times, to decorate and adorn articles useful in daily life, and to add an interest which is second to the usefulness of the ordinary surroundings of life. Between this art of the Egyptians and the work of Pheidias, the work of the Japanese and that of Michael Angelo and Titian, what is there which makes the one merely interesting and amusing, the other of vital importance in the world's culture? Perhaps the same kind of difference of value that exists between a piece of entertaining information and a true poem. In the nature of the Greeks there awoke a higher development of sensibility, and with this development their artists and their writers became possessed of the desire to turn creators, not only imitators. The Promethean fire was kindled within their hearts and brains. Imperative was the longing to give birth to that second self created by emanations of inventive imaginings which are the children of every poet. By stamping such imaginings into forms of art, they were born as realities to the world.

"And as imagination bodies forth
The form of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name."

Even more does the pencil and chisel of the greatest artists embody abstractions into a form. To develop such impulses into such forms of art the intellectual quality is necessary. As the early Egyptians, the

Japanese, and all who produce spontaneous art with a childlike ease, work their facility by the means of a natural, though generally an unthinking, almost unconscious intelligence, so the creative faculty of the poet artist is worked by the higher development of the intellectual qualities. The creative gift is born in the nature of the poet, but whether it ever gets into a form of current coin for the service and delight of the world in general depends mainly on the strength of those qualities of the intellect and character which alone can carry out successfully a translation of the inborn genius. It is an inborn genius which governs the complete conception which forms the aim towards which the true artist works, and which arises out of the highest, most spontaneous, least self-conscious part of his being ; namely, his emotions and sympathy towards the work created by a higher power than himself ; but the intellect is indispensable in working such a conception into a form.

When religion was a prominent interest in a nation's life, art was used as her interpreter. Now, instead of going hand in hand with the best literature of our time in interpreting the modern vein in thought and morals, it is every year adopting more and more the principles which govern the art of infantine civilizations without possessing childlike instincts in the fresh spontaneous form in which they are first born. It is believed this state of things is the result of the determined and conscious omission of the intellectual quality in our art training. The strongest emotions towards beauty do not, as a rule, arise when the most practical efficient mood is on us. When an artist is in his studio, his hand ready, and all the necessary but

uninspiring studio paraphernalia about him, his emotions are not likely to be stimulated to receive impressions which generate his best artistic creations. It is when he is very vividly and very really living in the wider atmosphere of a wide nature, and feeling those emotions which all human experiences abundantly give to the poet nature, that the seeds are sown which blossom into truly original and creative work. Memory, the faculty of grouping and separating ideas and emotions in the service of such creations, the grasping and holding of the distinct characteristics of the vision he wishes to put into a form in words, in clay, or on canvas, these are distinctly intellectual efforts ; and according to the strength of the poet's or artist's intellect, will be the success with which he will carry out the strong emotional impression into a form of perfect art.

Due to the influence of certain foreign schools of art, a tendency has arisen in the direction of art-study in the last ten years to return to making the bare statements of facts in nature, using all the science of centuries of art-culture to express merely the same amount of nature's meaning that the early Egyptians expressed without science, and aiming at no creation of form in which to express the inventive imaginings of that second self which governs the nature of the poet.

Many students have been induced to go to foreign schools expert in the *technique*, in order to learn the language of art, thinking they can train in one school and perform in another. As far as we can judge from the lives and study of great artists, no greater mistake could surely be made. Art feeling is too subtle, too

delicate a matter, to be played tricks with. The language of art and feeling in art are woven and interwoven so that there is no point at which poetry and emotion can be introduced into art by an effort of will. It is as absurd to think it possible to separate the language of art from its intention at any stage of study, as it would be to think it a satisfactory arrangement to say your prayers at one time and put off feeling religious to another. Certainly Mr. Millais learnt his best language of art by working into his painting his emotional preferences, and certainly the less emotion and sentiment he puts into his art the less good and complete is his language.

As a nation we have never demanded that art which involves prominently a working of the intellectual faculty. We have never seemed anxious to express or explain any serious, mental, or spiritual condition through our art. The general public has become accustomed to look for pleasing or sensational qualities alone. Certain easily appreciated qualities must steadily gain ground in popularity, owing to their being those that *tell out* best under the conditions in which modern works of art gain their reputation ; and it is these qualities which Mr. Millais has mastered with more power of genius than perhaps any other painter of the age. It is not by these alone that he has won his most lasting reputation as a painter : on the contrary, the ease with which he has achieved effects, which are striking on the Academy walls, has been a snare which will probably hurt his future fame. That Mr. Millais does with the charm of ease what many strive to do with difficulty and fail to do, does not prove that the thing is the most worth doing, or

even the best that Mr. Millais can do ; it only proves that some influence has guided popular taste in a certain direction favourable to Mr. Millais' most superficial powers. Undoubtedly the power of producing striking effects on the Academy walls is the shortest road to popularity. Pictures in which such effects are salient are more talked about, more written about, more easily sold ; and behind all art theories is the grim fact that an artist must live, or he cannot paint. None the less certain is it that the qualities which are put most into shade by the conditions of modern exhibition, are those in a picture which are the result of the artist having worked from a mental vision, from the impression with which an effect of nature has inspired his whole nature, from an endeavour to express a poetic sentiment. As the execution of a street pianoforte would be quite as effective in the roar of Piccadilly in the season, probably more so, than the execution of a Madame Schumann, so are forced effects, raw colouring, and execution in which all subtle delicate qualities are sacrificed for suggestions of realism, more striking among the crowds of new frames and neighbouring pictures, antagonistic in tone and colour to one another, than the art distinguished by subtle beauty and refinement. In the one case the strength of the painting seems to come out of the canvas and attack the spectator ; whereas, in the other, in those pictures in which those qualities dwell which are reflections of the deeper, more thoughtful side of human nature, we find a power in the art which, the longer we look at it, seems to draw us within their frames, away into an atmosphere which is not the common atmosphere of crowds

and hurry, but one of beauty, rest, and harmony. But who but a few whose vocation art is, has time to pause sufficiently for such an influence to inspire him when there are nearly two thousand works of art to be seen in at most two or three visits during the season to the Academy? Surely the demand made on the painter for an immediate effect under these modern conditions of exhibition is that which might more legitimately be demanded from the actor. With but very few of the conditions of real life at his command, the actor has yet to produce on his audience the effect of reality. Great actors are able so to assume the appearance of feeling every passion and sensation required, in order fully to develop the part they are playing, that often a more vivid impression on the sensibilities is produced at the time by their performance than would be the case were we to see the same circumstances happening before us in real life; the actor's power being to accentuate the situation, to gather up the scattered points of interest to a culminating point. But there is, nevertheless, always that in real life which touches a different sympathetic chord, a part of our nature far deeper than that which the actor can touch, however great his power of enlisting the sympathy of our sensibilities; the difference between the two impressions lying in the consciousness that the one is only a piece of acting, the real scene a piece of nature. Arising out of many modern conditions, there seems a temptation among modern artists to adopt the principles of the art of acting rather than those of nature; a temptation to force the realistic but passing and transitory effects at the expense of those qualities in nature which express her

more constant laws ; a temptation to appear more real than reality, more striking than truth ; a temptation to aim at the art of picture-making rather than to translate in a form of art the love and meaning of beauty, which is the true vocation of the born artist. While many conscientious, earnest workers are labouring to get the look of striking realism into their pictures, Mr. Millais gets it with a freshness, force, and ease which triumphs easily over more laboured efforts. His fellow-artists, as well as the public, recognize and acknowledge his superior facility.

It is a well-known fact that the most certain way of achieving immediate success is to accomplish, in a first-rate manner, what the greatest number are aiming at accomplishing. It is an equally certain fact that success does not invariably attend the highest genius during the lifetime of the artist who possesses it. The public mind may be distracted from the true aims of art into side channels of taste, grooved out by the passing fashion of the day ; but popular success always attends on those who, in a brilliant way, possess the qualities which adorn such a fashion. The whole spirit of the present age is in entire sympathy with efficiency, and admires above all powers the power of doing difficult things with apparent ease. No painter can honestly say painting is easy, and if any method implies it is easy, such a method must have in it something of a tricky element. The most the greatest men of the past have done is to make us forget that there is any art at all in their painting, all methods and styles being obliterated by the infusion of overpowering suggestions of beauty and ennobling sentiment. But painting in which the chief aim is to

challenge a comparison with the aspect of the physical reality, however great the skill of the artist, however full of genius and true instinct the training of his hand and eye, such painting must always be a losing game ; paint must always remain paint, and the trick of putting it on the canvas so that it assumes a vivid resemblance to the aspect of any object may startle us, interest and amuse us, but can never fulfil the legitimate object of high art, can never give us that satisfaction, that something which, added to our life of insight and of sympathy, to our sense of beauty and perfection, ennobles us when in the presence of great art, if even only for a moment, making us, for that moment at least, less trivial, less selfish, more truly human.

It is the quality of distinction which public taste insists on less and less every day, in all social concerns and in all its amusements, because true distinction is a quality incompatible with hurry, and hurry is necessary in the ordinary commonplace life of most of us, when, as at present, people greedily aim at living at too great a speed, at crushing more excitement, business, pleasure, and culture into the twenty-four hours than is possible in order to do full justice to any reasonable employment. Mr. Millais' later work is singularly deficient in the quality of distinction, but its popularity, instead of being injured, seems, on the contrary, to be enhanced.

It is believed Mr. Millais' genuine position as a great painter in the future will rest on the value of some dozen pictures, where he seems really to have found himself in a completer sense than as a mere executant. A curious characteristic of Mr. Millais'

genius is that, considering his splendid original power as an executant, he seems as an artist to lean on the feeling of other artists. He has not apparently the spring within his own nature which decides for him the best motive to paint, though when it is chosen for him he carries it out in a completely original manner. Still, in the pictures above alluded to, which are, it is believed, the groundwork and the future of his real fame, there is such a strong individuality in carrying out the sentiment as well as in the manner of expression, that we lose the feeling completely that these pictures were painted under the influence of certain schools or individuals. The essential matter here is not that of method or style of painting, of whether they are executed with Pre-Raphaelite minuteness or the breadth of a Velasquez. They pass into quite another region of considerations. They appear on that higher level on which all really great art rests, a level whose horizon stretches out and joins the interests and feelings of the world in general. It is not only those who have a knowledge or a special love for art who can appreciate them, but those, whether art lovers or not, who have sympathy with pure genuine emotion, who admire and discern in such art evidences of the main springs of healthy human passion which link individual human fates to the interests of the community at large. In such works as "The Huguenots," "The Release," "The North-West Passage," "The Youth of Sir W. Raleigh," "Yes," "Trust me," "Effie Dean," "The Grave Diggers," "The Blind Girl," "The burning of Autumn Leaves," "The Flood," "Knight crossing the Ford," a few of the children's portraits, and many of the illustrations to

Tennyson's poems, to Coleridge's "Love," and Mr. Trollope's earlier novels, and the illustrations of the "Parables," Mr. Millais assuredly shows himself to be a true poet, a great painter, and a perfect illustrator.

But unfortunately Mr. Millais has lately painted, in a method contrary, we feel, to any method of painting which has ever produced really great art—though in these days of speed, hurry, and effect, there is little distinction made between the manner in which Mr. Millais attacks his subject, painting without choice or discrimination whatever comes before his eye in his subject, and that of Velasquez, with whom he is often compared.

Mr. Ruskin, in the "Two Paths," quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds's opinion of the power of Velasquez's genius as a painter. "What we are all," said Reynolds, "attempting to do with great labour, Velasquez *does at once*." "Just think," continues Mr. Ruskin, "what is implied when a man of the enormous power and facility Reynolds had, says he was trying to do with great labour what Velasquez did at once." Mr. Ruskin then quotes from Boschini Velasquez's opinion of Titian :

"I saw in Venice,
The true test of the good and beautiful ;
First, in my judgment, ever stands that school,
And Titian first of all Italian men is."

Now let us turn to Boschini's account of the method of Titian's painting :

"In truth, Titian is the best of those who have painted. Giacomo Palma the Young (so named to

distinguish him from Giacomo Palma *il Vecchio*) told me he had had the good fortune to enjoy the wise precepts of Titian. That he (Titian) smothered his canvases with a mass of colour that made, so to speak, a bed or base for the touches which he painted over it. And I also have seen him—with resolute strokes and brushes full of colour, filling the same brush sometimes with light red to serve as a half-tint, sometimes with white rose, black, or yellow—produce, with his amount of knowledge, in four dashes of the brush the promise of a rare figure. In all cases such sketches of his were admired by many who travelled from far to see the best manner in which to enter into the *Pelago della Pittura*. After having made these precious foundations for his pictures he turned the canvases to the wall, and there he left them some months without looking at them. When he wished to paint on them again, he first examined them with a very critical observation, as if they were his worst enemies, to see what defects he could find in them, and if he found anything which was discordant with the delicacy of the intention of his art, as a beneficent surgeon operates on the infirm, he applied himself to reduce any swelling or superabundance of flesh, or to putting right an arm, if the form of the bony structure was not properly adjusted, or putting in its place a foot that had taken a discordant posture, and so on, without pity for its pain. Working in this way he constructed the figure, and reduced it to the most perfect symmetry that could represent the beauty of nature and of art. Having done this, he turned his hand to other work until the first was dry, and repeated the same process on other pictures. And so he worked

from time to time on them till he covered his figures as it were with live flesh, perfecting with such wonderful touches that at last only the breath seemed wanting. He never did a figure at once (*dalla primâ*), and used to say that anyone who improvised (*chechi cantâ all' improvviso*) could never make verses that were profound or really well put together. The essence of the finish, of the last touches, he put on from time to time with rubs of his fingers in the high lights approximating them, *avicinandosi alle meze tinte*, blending one tint with another, and again with a touch of the finger putting in a dark stroke in some angle to enforce it, or a touch of rose, like a drop of blood that seems to give life to the surface, the touches creeping on gradually, and so perfecting his animated figures. And Palma attested the fact that in finishing he painted more with the finger than with the brush."

According to this description of Titian's method of painting, it is evident he worked almost entirely from a mental vision, a memory of reality, and not from facts before his eye. No greater difference could exist than between this method of Titian's and the method of the modern realistic school. Of course if popular taste prefers the result of the method of the latter to that of Titian there is nothing more to be said, for clearly that method is best which brings about most forcibly the desired result. Here it is maintained, that the principles on which Titian painted, resulted in a worthy translation of the beauty in nature, and that the principles on which the modern realistic school works results only in a very unworthy translation of the cleverness of the painter; the nature of the whole man coming out but partially in his work,

and without that element of poetry which alone can raise art to the rank it ought to take in the general interests of society.

There is nothing so captivating as the unconscious spontaneous fascinations of childhood, but also there is nothing so aggravating as self-consciousness in a child when it tries to "make stock" of its fascinations. And so with native genius; it stamps all thought with an interest with which no teachable quality can give any subject: but when an artist uses his painter genius as an end instead of as a means, we are aggravated by a sense of pitiable waste of one of the rarest gifts ever bestowed upon man. The question, "Why is Mr. Millais our popular painter?" is shortly answered by, "To those who have shall be given." That he has done work which most justly entitles him to a very large share of genuine popularity with those whose favour is most worth having, is undeniable; that he also exhibits work which the public taste ought not to accept as deserving such a popularity is, it is feared, equally so. Nevertheless such work seems to stimulate and not to lessen his popularity. Every year's exhibition shows a growing dexterity among our English artists in the power of painting the facts of nature, and every year's exhibitions show that the facts chosen by the artists to paint are lower down in the scale of human interests. That the most commonplace superficial element in the most commonplace scenes is chosen more and more as suitable for pictures, does not describe matters as bad as they are. It is exceptional power used in the service of inadequate ideas which creates a low standard of taste, and casts art, like many other things

in modern life which are meant to be beautiful, under the graceless tyranny of the superficial. We must not blame Mr. Millais for lowering our taste, though we might remind him that genius is only in its right place when it leads and does not follow fashion, but we must chiefly blame ourselves for allowing our taste to be lowered. If the public demanded great art, it would get it. It gets it at times without demanding it, and, sad to say, without always rightly appreciating it. If ever we English demand an art from our painters which shall sympathize with the emotional side of our deeper feelings, which shall translate our moral, spiritual, and intellectual instincts—if, in fact, we cease to be children with regard to art, and demand from it what the Athenians, the Florentines, the Venetians, and the early Germans demanded from their artists—the supply will probably be equal to the demand. It is not because we in the nineteenth century have not emotions as worthy, if not as vivid, as those possessed by the Greeks and Italians, that our art has fallen from the first rank of the world's interests, from the place it held when the work of the Parthenon was sculptured, and when the works on the walls of the Sistine Chapel and Doge's Palace were painted; but we have ceased to use art as a means of expression for the deeper, more serious part of our nature. We must not think that the most prominently visible life among those Greeks and Italians was that which was expressed by the elevated art their culture has left us. They had a frivolous inadequate life going on, probably as palpably as we have in our modern commonplace life of business and society; but their finer senses knew that that was not the life to translate

into their art. They had a rare sense and preference for *distinction*.

To quote again from Mr. Ruskin, the "difference between great and mean art lies not in definable methods of handling or styles of representation, or choices of subjects, but wholly in the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed. We cannot say that a painter is great because he paints boldly or paints delicately, because he generalizes or particularizes, because he loves detail, or because he disdains it. He is *great* if by any of these means he has laid open noble truths, or aroused noble emotions."

It is believed Mr. Millais is great in those pictures where his genius has attained such a result, and that he is not great in many, especially later works, in which he has not even attempted to produce such a result. But his work having aroused a genuine sympathy and admiration by means of truly interesting qualities, his pictures still remain equally popular, or more so, irrespective of these great qualities; showing a want of discrimination in the public taste, a want of distinction in perceiving in what consists his highest power, which is doing a very real injury to our English school of art.

All expression in art must naturally have a more intrinsic interest for those who are in sympathy with art as art. These, in the nature of things, must always be but a very limited number; and one of the most unwholesome, because most unreal, tendencies of the present day seems to be an effort to force an interest in art beyond its natural limits, public taste requiring at the same time from art the most meagre suggestions

of the class of ideas which would without unreality or strain be interesting to all classes. This straining to be *intense* about what is superficial in the general interests of society, leads not only to the peculiarly fantastic kind of unreality and affectation, the intensity of a "Postlethwaite," but to a duller and less original kind of art which is described above as the creed of the superficial. Foreign taste, in matters of feeling, makes for itself a standard of mediocrity; and foreign taste is influencing very decidedly our national taste in art, probably because foreign schools are more dexterous in using the language of art. Painting done as quickly as possible of an effect seized as quickly as possible, of a place or person the painter cares for as little as possible; it is towards this kind of work popular taste has lately declined. Brilliant and sudden effects create for the artist enthusiastic popularity, but do they win the real prize? Popularity is such a powerful influence in itself, a compound interest always rolling up, giving so largely to those who already have so much, that in itself it becomes a danger. There is a danger when the top of the hill of present fame is reached, when the effort and strain in order to secure success and sympathy become no longer a necessity, when all the good things seem to come of themselves, a danger of the artist losing his footing on that safer ground which would insure future and lasting fame. The life of a great painter is so short for all he has to do in it, there is hardly a day for rest. But when we think what is the prize great art has won for itself, is any price too dear to pay for it? By inspiring an ever-living vivid interest in noble emotions, by winning the best sympathies and enthusiasm of future genera-

tions, by making friends and admirers among the best of all times, the worthiest part of the artist's short span of life is lived over and over again in his works. That is the prize great art has won for itself, but at one price only—the complete devotion of the life of the artist to his best genius.

**THE PAINTED POETRY OF WATTS
AND ROSSETTI.**



THE PAINTED POETRY OF WATTS AND ROSSETTI.

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"For I have heard it said,
There is an art which in their piedness shares
With great creating nature."—"Say, there be ;
Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean : so over that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes."—*A Winter's Tale.*

WITHIN a year the collected works of these two artists have been exhibited in three galleries. Last year at the Grosvenor Gallery the art which represents, on careful consideration, about half the work of Mr. Watts's life, was exhibited ; and this year at the Royal Academy and at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, the chief work of Mr. Rossetti's life has been exhibited.

It is believed the claim of these two artists to rank among the first artists of all times consists in the fact that they both take a very high place among *poet-painters*.

In times that are now long past it was often the province of the painter's art to teach facts as well

as to create emotion towards beauty. There was then a scope for much elaborate art to be painted in order that an illiterate public should learn history and *religion*, and be impressed by notable passing events. But those times are over. Now photography and cheap engravings portray and endlessly repeat scenes of passing interest, and can procure for thousands the likeness of any place or person of public interest. Every kind of literature is also within everyone's reach, that describes in words the feelings and facts of life. Now, art should maintain her highest level or cease to expect a distinct place in the world's growing and better interests. Science will probably soon discover a means of photographing colour, and then the realistic school of art which aims only at giving the outward aspect of an object artistically arranged, without any reflection of the artist's nature, will be completely beaten on its own ground. But that art which emanates from a poetic preference, the highest art, in fact, painted and sculptured poetry, will not only retain the interest which it always has inspired, but will be more distinctly recognized as belonging to the same class of intellectual interests as do the best writings in prose and poetry, and will be recognized as demanding the same class of emotional response as that which the best music excites. If the mass of so-called art yearly produced on semi-manufacturing principles ever settles down into its right place, a greater lucidity in the mind of the public as to what makes art *art* might be hoped for. The general intellectual world might learn perhaps how mistaken it is to demand even from the highest art that it should feed the intellect without first touching the emotional

qualities, and inspiring a satisfaction in true beauty of line and colour ; and on the other hand the so-called artistic world might well cease from demanding and desiring solely that a limited kind of emotional pleasure should be excited by art, without insisting that such emotion should lead to a satisfaction also of the intellectual and higher faculties. If such a reform in art feeling ever came about, then painted and sculptured poetry would probably be recognized as the art which alone justified the immense and difficult toil which any painting and sculpture of a really finished and complete character necessitates.

How to describe in writing the element that makes the work of Mr. Watts and Mr. Rossetti painted poetry? Perhaps only by going through rather an elementary kind of argument. In the earliest drawings by students of art there is in those of any promise always an individual character. Go into any art school, and you will see how different in character are the drawings by every separate student of the same model. Probably, as the students advance, their work will have more the character of the teaching of the school in which they study ; but again as they emerge into the freer atmosphere of their own studios the work of any student who is really going to do anything is stamped strongly with his own individuality, which develops more and more distinctly as he " finds himself in his art." If Watts, Leighton, Burne-Jones, Millais, and any correspondingly famous French painter were to paint a study from the same model, we should have five drawings as distinctly different in character as it would be possible to see. Add to these a photograph of the same model, and you get a sixth per-

fectly different rendering of the subject. Had Michael Angelo, Titian, Raphael, and Botticelli attempted to draw the same model, having only in view to make an exact likeness, we should in the same way find perfectly distinct individualities evinced in the sketches. The fact is that not only do no two artists see nature the same, however highly trained their eyes may be, but that the unconscious preferences of a nature's whole condition dictates in each individual case the treatment, accentuating one side or the other of nature's complete truth. There is no such thing as positively provable *rightness* after the teachable qualities in art are once satisfied. The whole nature, not only the eye, is the tablet on which the facts of "sight" are reflected; and if spiritual and intellectual powers are prominent elements in the artist's nature, as well as emotional sympathy towards form and colour, the artist's gift reflects such elements as part of nature's truth, affecting its aspect as necessarily as does the sunlight or the moonlight. The motive power of the art emanating from such natures springs from a richer well, including human powers of a higher order than those of mere sense and emotion. The core of the truth of nature is revealed to the poet-painter, not merely the truth of her aspect. This is unquestionably obvious, but does not answer the whole question. Not only is there in really great painted poetry a power in the purely artistic gifts rightly to translate in the language of art emotional, spiritual, and intellectual truths, but there is genius in the touch which makes such art not only a right rendering of such elements in nature, but a happy rendering. There is to be found in it an inspiration in the handicraft as well as in the

mind. For instance, in the quality of the flesh painting in Mr. Watts's work, and in the quality of the jewel and flower painting in Mr. Rossetti's work, there is a poetry which is different and more impressive than in the poetry of real flesh, flowers, and jewels, not only because there is a human interest of happy choice about it, but because there is also a loveliness of inspired touch which caressingly beautifies the painting itself independently of the aspect of the original. The greatest delight of the artist's craft is to see the poetic preference of his own nature carried out by a happy touch which adds something to nature and makes her his very own. Such a gift is almost unconsciously possessed, proceeding rather from the general condition of the artist's æsthetic nature and the habitual tone of his sensibilities than from any conscious effort.

The value of this individuality which stamps all work, noticeable for any power whatsoever from the earliest student studies, is to be gauged by the character of the unconscious no less than the conscious preference of the artist. The greater his powers as a poet, the subtler, the more elevated, the more extended will be his sympathies with nature ; and if he be a born artist as well as a poet, that sense of the inner as well as the outer aspect of nature's truth will inspire his touch as a painter or a sculptor, and complete his work with the beauty which belongs to art as art, and not to art as a copy of nature only. But, like the poetry of motion and sound, this poetry of sight and feeling directing touch is too subtle a thing for words to analyze or describe. How to put into words the excitement, like that of a magnetic influence, which is created by music ; or, again, the charm of motion that,

for instance, we feel as we watch the flight of a bird, swaying and balancing on its outstretched wings, then sweeping a long swift curve in the air. Such delicate impressions on the senses are too subtle for words. Beauty in the quality of great poetic art creates a very positive emotion in many, though not by any means in all ; but it is quite beyond words to explain. Those who do not feel emotion at the sight of poetry in nature are, as regards works containing suggestions of such poetry, outsiders ; they fail in possessing the right data on which to found theories or criticism. There are many, it must be remembered, whose natures do not respond to the poetry in sound, in motion, or in what is seen, and who have notwithstanding what are called correct eyes and correct ears. There are also many who make themselves into partisans, and, because they see and feel poetry in art carried out according to one school of art ideas, refuse any belief in its existence carried out in any other. There is a genuine difference in natural taste, the result of associations and the native tendencies of character and mind, and there is a theoretic difference, based chiefly on a combative spirit—the genuine “I do not like you, Dr. Fell” argument, and the far less intelligent and more intricate argument, “This is right, everyone allows ; so this must be wrong because it is unlike what everyone knows is right.” As if Nature ever repeated herself in genius !

When it is asserted that Mr. Watts and Mr. Rossetti are great poet-painters, such an assertion is not based merely on individual sympathy with their work, but on the fact that the enthusiasm of a very large majority of the public has been excited by the beauty in it. Nothing but the element of poetry in art can excite

such enthusiasm. It vouches for its existence. Genuine enthusiasm excited by art is the public recognition made to the poetical element in it, not to the cleverness, the science, or the industry.

Mr. Watts's and Mr. Rossetti's painted poetry could hardly be more unlike in its chief characteristics. It is desired here not so much to criticise as to describe their work. The year that includes these remarkable exhibitions includes also the death of Mr. Rossetti. Regret at the comparatively early death of so great a genius is still too keen for any who have long cared for his work to wish to dwell on any signs of unfulfilled promise to be found in it. Sufficient is it to say that it stood victoriously the ordeal of being collected and exhibited together. That the work of Mr. Watts stood the test last year is unnecessary to add ; so unanimous was the verdict. It is, of course, only the sifted few of many generations that give the final verdict which places the great where they are eventually to stand among the great. In the course of time, even when the absence of true instinct and fine taste fails to supply the public with a genuine appreciation of true genius in art, fame, and the halo which shines round a great name all the brighter the further history puts it back into the mystery of the past, will attract the imagination even of the dullest ; for we all more or less take genius for granted, and approach its work with foregone conclusions as to its merit, when the opinion of a few centuries has guaranteed it. But till then there will always be found many who prefer putting what is to them any unexplained individuality in the work under a microscope, and analyzing any points which do not fit into pre-conceived necessities in art, than to revel in the

chief characteristic of the work, namely, that it is the work of genius, of gifts most rarely bestowed on humanity, and still more rarely worked out in any complete form. The many *buts* which invariably follow the statement that a man of our own time is a genius prove how chary are the public in their enthusiasm for the quality, how little genuine love and sympathy it creates. Genius startles, it excites attention, but only slowly does it wield its real power, and only time can place it on its right pedestal.

It may be asked what is the use of connecting so as to compare the art of Mr. Watts and that of Mr. Rossetti, when they are so different that the only point in common is that both are poet-painters, and have each produced examples of very high expressional art.

In the present case there is a desire to protest alike for the special virtues in both poet-painters. It is felt that in Mr. Watts's art there is a perfection in the poetry of form which has rarely been surpassed, and in Mr. Rossetti's art a vividness of beauty in the poetry of colour equally pre-eminent. Perhaps it may be said with truth that our emotions are more elevated by Mr. Watts's poetic art and rendered more vivid by Mr. Rossetti's. It must be felt, however, by any who seriously study their work, that the temperaments of both artists are steeped not only with "sincerity of emotion," but by a worship for beauty. It is to both a sacred flame, though one may worship at the wider freer light of the sun itself, and the other at the flame on an enshrined altar: the feeling in the art of both painters emanates from a sense of awe and mystery; though to the one the poetic impulse of his art is like the

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mystery of dawn when clear rays shoot up into infinite wide-spreading space, giving promise of a yet fuller light. It suggests the mysteries of all spheres and of all times, of the largest conditions of creation. To the other it is more the mystery of a lamp-lit shrine, not of the well of light itself; the mystery of pent-up fervency, of

Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

It is more human, less divine. It is not so free to soar up into pure æther; still, through its passionately human qualities, it yearns upwards to be at rest, and worships devoutly at the human shrines which suggest such rest. Both these poets are great enough to be reverent in their attitude of worship, and fully to realize how much bigger is the thing they worship than are the worshippers. Both are immeasurably outside and beyond all vanity in their art, or the desire to appear *clever* or produce an effect for the sake of effect.

Both are great colourists, both great masters of the beauty of tone and design of line, but Mr. Watts has as much the power of a sculptor as that of a painter. Mr. Rossetti has, comparatively speaking, nothing of the sculptor in him. In Mr. Watts's painting there is invariably the poetry of atmosphere, often of sea and sky space; in Mr. Rossetti's work the designs are treated as almost on one plane. If any distance comes into the design, it is coloured so as to bring it close upon the foreground, as in the "Hesterna Rosa" and "Dr. Johnson and the Methodists."

In Mr. Watts's colour and tone there is a poetry in the suggestion of atmosphere and in the veil

of mystery which distance gives, whilst there is in Mr. Rossetti's work a greater power in the beauty of the thing itself. Perhaps in no painting ever before seen have the concentrated rays from a brain on fire with colour-worship glowed with such fervent strength or such peremptory individuality as in Mr. Rossetti's art ; nor has any artist ever more completely conquered the stubbornness of the pigment in oil painting nor made colour burn with more vivid jewel-like intensity, like the brilliancy of stained glass through which light is glowing. In his art there is a sense of richness and decorative splendour which has a distinct poetry of its own. Not the tiniest space is left vaguely to chance ; every smallest detail is designed in harmony and tone with the whole. Never have draperies, jewels, or flowers been treated with more freedom, richness, and grandeur of design, or with more completeness and reverence for their beauty.

Needless to say both are artists whose real power is inborn, depending on no other artist-individuality, living or dead. Both have evinced a singular power of *detachment*, but Mr. Watts has as yet inspired no school of followers, though he has shown special power and individuality by being influenced by no contemporary mind.

Mr. Rossetti's genius was the real motive power that welded into form a new and very real enthusiasm on art matters. It was his magnetic power as an individual no less than as an artist that inspired in others a devotion to the views in art which resulted in the so-called Pre-Raphaelite movement. His power of influencing others as an artist was immense. Still it is not at all surprising that in judging of his art the

buts are very loud. Frankly it must be owned he never took the trouble to grind at that side of art which was a dull difficulty to him ; and the side which was a dull difficulty to him was naturally where his sensibilities were least keenly alive to beauty. Admirers should not shunt the difficulty by ignoring the importance of the beauty he does not give, and which is as much one of nature's precious beauties as are those which Mr. Rossetti gave us in such splendid power and abundance. He had not clearly the same fine perception with regard to structural proportion and to right quantities as he had for beauty of design in line, tone, and colour, and he did not bend his neck under the yoke and learn the teachable part of that side of art ; so his work in the above respects is often assailable to the adverse criticism of students in the most elementary stage of their art.

The *science* of drawing, though not always very intelligently, is very indefatigably taught in these days. A certain standard is created of what correctness in the teachable qualities of drawing should be in most of those who labour and look at art. Against this standard of correctness Mr. Rossetti's art often transgresses. Even more must be owned. In certain instances it transgresses against a much more necessary virtue in art. In the drawing of the mouth often, in the drawing of the arms and hands sometimes, and in the painting of the flesh of his later works, it is felt that there is a positive element of ugliness such as is almost incomprehensible in one whose senses were so keenly and powerfully alive to beauty as a rule. He paints the lips of a mouth too often with a metallic hardness, and omits any suggestion of one of the

loveliest parts in a face — namely, the expressive sensitive variety in the curve of the upper lip, that line which trembles between light and shade, colour and tone. In the treatment of the flesh in some of his later works there is a livid lilac hue in the shadows, and a streaky coarse texture in the painting which is all the more noticeable because of the perfect quality of the painting of flowers and draperies in the same pictures. But such criticism as the above would not only be unfair and inadequate but unintelligent, were not much greater stress laid on the extremely rare and noble beauty of much of Mr. Rossetti's drawing and the unsurpassed splendour and richness in his power of designing line. His power as a colourist is universally admitted, but it must be remembered that his chalk drawings, in which such power is only evinced so far as that the sensibility creating it enriches the feeling for tone, are fully as interesting as the painted works. The virtues and the faults are perhaps both more striking in Mr. Rossetti's than in Mr. Watts's art. The colour is more vivid and the faults bolder.

The rare sense of balance in Mr. Watts's art produces a strong influence, but cause and effect are not so traceable as they are in Mr. Rossetti's art. Nobility and dignity are felt as inherent, but the manner in which such qualities are translated by art is too foreign to modern schools of art, and indeed to modern modes of life, to make such a recognition easy. It is commonly asserted, with respect to art teaching and study, that drawing can be taught, but colour must be nature's inborn gift. This surely is only true if we regard the sense of colour alone as synonymous with an emotional

delight, and a feeling for form alone the result of acquired knowledge of proportion, quantity, structure, and foreshortening. But no teaching can inspire a passionate sympathy with beauty of line, rightness in quantity, precision in rendering the exact character of undulating surfaces and curves, straightnesses and distances, which is evident in Mr. Watts's genius and was also noticeable in Turner's, and which is quite as native a gift as any sensitiveness to beauty of colour could be. Though complete knowledge of structural form and correctness in drawing is there, the beauty of Mr. Watts's drawing does not lie alone in there being in it an extreme perfection of *correctness*. It is the poetry in line and form which his genius seizes and delights in, and which makes him use line and proportion as expressional exponents in his painted poems. In the genius of Mr. Rossetti there is much of that emotional feeling towards the beauty of form, and his very remarkable power in design gives us endless ingenious varieties in the composition of line, but the teachable correctness is often wanting. There is a rightness in art qualities which can be proved by the science of art, and there is a rightness which is beyond all theories to explain and all teachings to inspire, and which can only be proved by the power in it of inspiring emotion and delight. This is the only rightness which is fervently true and perfectly beautiful, and can be seized and pictured alone by nature's gift of genius, and appreciated alone by a natural instinct of delight in beauty. This is the rightness of a Giotto, and it is here maintained that as a rule this is a rightness to be found in Rossetti's work. But to be quite impartial it is only fair to allude to the difference of

the opportunities of learning completely the science of his art possessed by Giotto and that possessed by Rossetti. The last could distinctly have learned what it was impossible for the former to learn. Still it must not also for a moment be forgotten that Mr. Rossetti worked at the qualities of his art which were sympathetic to his own vein of thought and feeling with a moral conscientiousness and intensity of labour which few artists have ever shown to the same degree.

The exhibition of Mr. Watts's work inspired but one verdict as far as certain qualities in it went. There was not one dissentient voice as to the qualities of dignity and nobility being inherent in his work. He appears, in working at his art, to have had constantly in view a feeling which is to him inseparable from all true art. It seems not merely to be the poet's longing to give a form to his inventive imaginings, or expression in art to a mental vision, but it seems to be a certain craving to reach a high and very extended level in poetry; to express a very sincere and passionate reverence for the beauty of nature's nobility; to disentangle it from the narrowness, smallness, and meanness to which the ugly mistakes in human nature have reduced so much of our existence. It is a natural and unconscious preference for a high level of æsthetic thought and feeling which must have been the indigenous soil in which Mr. Watts's art has grown and flourished. The poetry of his designs echoes little of the sentiment of any other painted poems, old or new, unless it be sometimes a design by William Blake, but we are often reminded by them of a strain of music by Beethoven, or of a wide-reaching, sustained phrase by Handel, and lines of written

poetry by Milton. Perhaps the two poetic creations which strike the same chord to our imaginations more exactly than do any others we know of in the whole range of poetry are Beethoven's "Creation Hymn" and Mr. Watts's "Newly Created Eve."¹

One very distinct aim to be traced in Mr. Watts's art is that only through beauty should art attempt to express any other emotion. Beauty of form, colour, quality, tone of surface and texture, must be there, or the language of art ceases to be the legitimate medium through which ideas and feelings ought to be expressed. Also, that in treating the grave and sad side of life, beauty can still be the chief element, not only in the form but in the feeling of the work. The heroic element in life, the friendly attitude towards death, can still be the prominent feeling in works which treat of the un pitying inevitable mysteries none of us can either solve or avoid. In his collected work no thoughtful student could fail to trace evidences of the manner of life of an artist who has been able to produce such a number of ideal works of a character which necessitates the lengthiest process of painting. He cannot fail to discern evidences of strength of purpose, brave will, and lofty aim, which has never allowed itself to relax, however difficult the strain and the struggle, however little sympathy the public showed towards the art most really his own; of the balance and sobriety of judgment which has guided the fine artistic sensibilities in this work, and which has never allowed a natural strong dislike of publicity to grow into a morbid seclusion of such art from public criticism. A

¹ Unfortunately Mr. Watts has entirely repainted this picture since the above was written.

single aim of doing justice to nature's gift of the genius for beauty, a worthy purpose of devoting such an aim to a patriotic feeling of wishing to make English art worthy of English deeds and English literature, such an aim and such a purpose have alone made such efforts possible. Such single purpose and pure intention have overcome, as far as it can be overcome, the difficulty, enormous in the case of an artist, of continual want of health. That Mr. Watts's art might have had the advantage of a robuster quality had he had better health, is probably true, but also would it not have lost something which is as interesting as it is rare?

When the temperament is melancholic, we find a deeper source of interest is required in order that the necessary excitement should be stirred which shall result in action. The mere half-animal pleasure of using natural powers, which we see often evincing itself where genius is allied to robustness of constitution, naturally does not exist where the health and temperament are such as to make all work a labour. But in the case of a melancholy temperament where a fervent intensity of nature and a yearning to do great things are united to great natural artistic gifts, the sufficient exciting power is there to necessitate expression. But such expression will be used as a means and not as an end only. The further excitement of aiming to express abstract ideas which will embody the essential interests of life will be required, or at all events perpetual change of key in the pictorial motive of the work, the excitement of freshly rendering new conditions of effects. We trace, as in the case of Michael Angelo, a yearning for something more complete than

artistic completeness, a yearning to express in the language of art not only the inventive imaginings of the poet, but a sympathy with the wider outside conditions of all life and its puzzles. The very nature of the aspiration excludes completion in a contracted and finite sense. The aim of the subject passes out of conditions which can be complete as far as realistic rendering can make them so. The poet-painter, in order to translate into a form such inventive imaginings, has to fall back on the consistency in the invariable laws of nature viewed from the comprehension of the poet, the comprehension which includes the imagination. In this larger area he has to keep the balance between nature's obvious invariable facts and nature's ideality. It is the existence of this sense of balance in his art which is the sign of the greatest power in Mr. Watts's genius. He has spared no labour in acquiring a mastery of those general truths of form and colour which are inherent in nature's laws, but he has used such a mastery to express the further suggestions of nature which affect not only our eyes and our minds, but the no less real because less obvious part of us, our hearts and better emotions. This it is which, from an intellectual and moral point of view, makes his art *great art*.

Mr. Watts's work, in some very important respects, is also an echo of our own times. All really good work, the result of original genius, must of necessity echo back the feeling of its own time in one respect or another. Instead of narrowing all the interests of art into the aim of displaying a technical expertness, as in the case of much of the popular work now painted, Mr. Watts uses his knowledge and artistic sensibilities in a

wider field—a field which embraces a poetic vision and an intellectual sympathy—and in this lies one resemblance between his art and that of the old masters. When a passion for art is ingrained in the very essence of a nature, it is developed by the artist to express something beyond its own cleverness. When we can walk with ease, we use our walking powers to go somewhere ; when we have learned to write, we use our power of writing to say something. It is only the baby who has a difficulty in walking, and the child who is learning to write, who have no further aim but to walk and to write. Even to the most gifted the art of painting is, and always has been, a most difficult language to acquire any proficiency in ; and modern conditions seem to have extinguished in a degree certain influences favourable to the growth and expansion of those finer sensibilities which in waves have been granted to civilizations of the past. And yet a great desire and ambition to be artistic has become the fashion, and with a great strain and a great fuss we are all trying to learn the language. Exhibitions every year are crowded with conscientious and laboured work, and show—as far as learning the language goes—that our studies are encouraging. Yet, strange to say, every year's exhibitions seem to prove that what our modern art-language has to say is becoming less and less interesting : less and less is it used to interpret the serious and earnest elements in modern society, or the complete and earnest nature of the artist as an individual who produces it.

Undoubtedly much of our modern art does not justify its existence. But, in leaving the last winter's exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, the feeling which

was generally and publicly expressed was that, though the work was not invariably sympathetic to the understanding or to the taste of every visitor, still it was a *power*; it carried with it a dignifying, elevating influence; it was the expression of a peremptory native instinct used to noble aims. In some of even the remarkable modern work we cannot help feeling that the amount of labour and exercise of will expended on it might have been more usefully employed had the painter been an explorer in science, the teacher of some handicraft, the head or organizer of bodies of men. But in Mr. Watts's art we feel that the right temperament has governed the particular kind of expression; the sensibilities have been excited in the direction which best fulfils the claims of art. Art is his natural language—difficult, most difficult, in these times, when native art instinct is so insufficiently fed by modern conditions; still it is evident, Nature is for ever weaving itself into a form of art in his brain, for ever demanding a translation from him of her meanings and of her beauties. In his art there is the treble nature of the Greek character and feeling for form and sense of restrained balance in beauty, combined with a Hebraic solidity on the one side, and a Gothic imperative impetus and aspiration towards a beauty of the imagination on the other. These combined powers carry his feeling for beauty into a rare and very vital atmosphere. The doctrine of "art for art's sake" is often propped up by a reference to Greek perfection in art. But the really important question with regard to following the Greeks is: What would their fine sensibilities have aimed at expressing in art had they had to face present conditions? Assuredly they would not

have ignored any side of life out of which beauty might be extracted. If in our meaning of the word beauty we include the expression of tender sensibilities, and noble thoughts, then *beauty for beauty's sake* might not inaptly be used as the text most appropriate to use with reference to Mr. Watts's art. No Gothic artist ever loved to face the beauty of mystery more than does Mr. Watts—mystery in every quality. Never does his genius flourish more happily than when his imagination reaches that borderland where thought and spirit half lift the curtain that divides this world's tangible certainties from those powers which Nature shows us as existing, but which she does not explain. Yet in working into a form of art immaterial realities, his genius is guided by his native instinct for those principles which made Greek art at once so direct, so restrained, so subtle, and so dignified. The many-sided nature in Mr. Watts's art makes it more completely true to the thought and culture of his own time than could any single-sided genius be.

Mr. Watts has shown throughout his career a very marked power of detachment. Though evidently always in the mental attitude of a student, and showing genuine and admiring sympathy towards the work of some of his fellow artists, he has nevertheless retained his self-centred individuality in a most remarkable degree. Both the conscious and unconscious parts of his genius have remained completely uninfluenced by his sympathy or his admiration for any modern work. No artist has ever worked in a more isolated way, on ground which he shared less with any contemporary artist. Absolute knowledge and certainty in the drawing, and a loose, but invariably

purposeful, touch of the brush, are perhaps as near a true description of the method of his manipulation as can be given. In every picture he ever painted it is clear that the mind has worked before the hand was indulged in the pleasure of an effect—that every emotional delight in form and colour has paid its toll of thought and reflection before it has been allowed to translate itself on his canvas. One of the most striking evidences of power in Mr. Watts's genius is the great variety and range of subject to be found in his work. As before mentioned, the works exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery represented the result of about half his labour as an artist. Among the many pictures which remained in his studio during the exhibition are some which are quite among his finest works. This variety is probably owing chiefly to his having such a very strong sense of the *nature* of, and consequently sympathy with, a great variety of conditions—a *nature* which has less to do with the realistic aspect of an object at any given moment than with its lasting and essentially distinctive characteristics. In the painting of sea and sky, for instance, there is that peculiar charm and truth rendered of the wide, far-stretching space, the same quality of texture played on by the variety which distance and atmosphere alone produce. It is in this quality wherein lies chiefly the poetry of one of his most popular pictures, "The Return of the Dove." The monotony of the heavy swollen tides receding away to the horizon is only varied by the changes which distance gives to the wide spaces of the water, and to the gray of a sullen, hopeless sky. In the companion picture, "And the Dove returned no more," a very different effect of distance is suggested.

The cloudy vapours have lifted, there is an awakening of colour and light, still misty and young, like the blue eye of a child, when it first wakes into the life and movement of the day. There is the exact nature of that condition of the atmosphere which we see when the dark, heavy, ominous weather clears off and the birds begin to sing, and Nature readjusts herself to a brighter, happier mood. But most of all in the human face and figure does he give us *Nature* in the widest, truest sense of her meaning. The important reality impressed upon us about the people he paints is not, as in the case of so much of the realistic work so popular at present, how the light struck on certain forms and colours at a given moment in the steady north light of a studio, producing patches of light and shade, colour and tone, of certain forms and tints ; but the very nature of his sitter absorbed into the one aspect in the portrait. The nature of the man, the nature of his employment, whether he be poet, artist, statesman, musician, ecclesiastic, or soldier, suggested by a certain atmosphere, through which the individuality is also strongly traceable. It is not only the man but his life which is included in these presentments. Perhaps in portraits more than in any other of Mr. Watts's pictures the conscious and the unconscious power is evinced in almost an equal degree. Beside the sitter seems to have stood another subject from which Mr. Watts painted quite as much as from the man himself. This was a mental vision of his sitter, the impression which his life and work, nature and position, have created in the painter's imagination. Consciously he strives to impersonate this impression in his painting, but at the same time his native art instinct renders subtle truths

almost unconsciously from the aspect of the real sitter.

Mr. Watts is greatest as a colourist where he is greatest in all qualities of his art, where he uses colour to express and carry out the imaginative meaning of his subject. The mere material beauty of colour and tone never satisfies him unless it enters fitly into the scheme of the sentiment in the work,—unless it adds a meaning as well as a beauty. Over and over again he alters the colour and tone in a picture which to others may seem beautiful till he gets tone and colour appropriate to the scheme of the whole intention, and to do their full service in not only charming the eye, but in impressing the higher sensibilities and satisfying his own intellectual judgment. It is obviously a native instinct which impels the choice and creates the finely-poised sense of selection in the first instance, but in the creation of art fine instincts are turned into permanent and useful principles by the presence of a superior intellectual judgment. It is by having developed instincts into principles by thoughtful labour and experiments that all great artists have acquired knowledge and power necessary to work out an ideal art, which contains at the same time nature's essential truths of form and colour and the value of a poet's creation.

One truth, invariable in the aspect of nature, but most rarely seen in art, is that of the atmosphere which plays round all objects, softening and mellowing all forms, tones, and colour. In Mr. Watts's work, between the picture-plane and the subject, the existence of space is always suggested. He never brings even a life-sized head exactly on to the same plane as the

frame. He does not focus his subject so that it seems to start out of the frame towards you, but he leads the eye within the frame into a toned atmosphere of repose and quiet. This harmonizing all objects within a general atmosphere is one chief point in which Mr. Watts's work reminds us of the old masters' work. There is the same absence of any microscopic searching out for facts and details which are within and beyond the aspect of his subject focussed as a whole, and yet there are true suggestions of every visible variety in the textures and surfaces of nature. The true and separate character is given to each kind of surface, but over the separateness he spreads a bloom of atmosphere, the indefiniteness of air which hangs like a veil, and softens with a filmy texture the forms of everything in nature when even only a few yards distant from the eye. Not that there is any smearing, or that Mr. Watts ever excludes any individuality or precision there may be in the true aspect of detail, but he adds a further truth, and one very rarely found in modern art, the mystery of atmosphere. The mystery, or rather uncertainty disguised, arising from a want of knowledge and precision in drawing is, we all know, but too common; but when supplanted by clearness and definite knowledge there is very rarely added the charm and beauty of atmosphere. In this, as in the fine sensitiveness to the delicate feeling in the drawing of the varied character of surface and relation of distances, we are reminded of Turner's genius. In this he enters into new fields of difficulty. Nothing is so untangible, so difficult to represent, as atmosphere; and to include it without sacrificing unduly other truths in the aspect of nature, such as

precision of form, brilliancy of colour, and depth of tone, necessitates the existence of a fine sense of balance and a power of scaling rightly the distinct ingredients of an effect. In Mr. Watts's work no one quality is forced, no one power asserts itself, but all the process of the work is made servant to the chief motive.

A very real harm in the life of some artists gifted with genius results from an absence of sympathy. In some artists' characters there is an almost morbid proneness to see nothing but the faults in their own work, and if an artist with such a temperament finds no echoing sympathy in the feeling of the public, the more certain he may be that his aims in art are worthy aims, the more will he be likely to exaggerate the shortcomings in the execution ; and, though united to true genius there is always a faith in the value of the inner light, the artist is often over-diffident, and over-rates his own share in the failure of his works to secure popularity. In the case of Mr. Watts's art it should be remembered how very isolated his position as an artist has always been. After he returned from Italy more than thirty years ago, he painted "Time and Oblivion," the first complete work stamped with his own individual imaginative power. At that time the Pre-Raphaelite movement was just beginning, and the members of the "Brotherhood" were strong and intense in their own beliefs, and had a hard fight to make good their own ground. They had little sympathy to expend for any other view of art. Mr. Watts had the sincerest sympathy and interest in the movement, and profound admiration for the genius of some of its followers ; but their ways in art were not his

ways, and without any intentional detachment his strong individuality has always kept the intention and aim of his work, as well as the manner of its execution, very distinct and separate from that of any of his contemporaries. The "Brotherhood" absorbed all the strong life of the English school. Their influence, the great genius of Turner, and Mr. Ruskin's true and eloquent writing on Turner, developed a vivid interest in lines of art far away from the line which was peculiarly Mr. Watts's own. His work spoke to the public in a strange language, and many made the mistake of thinking he was merely reviving the dead language of the old masters. This was a great error, as public opinion has since recognized it to be. Mr. Watts's genius has asserted its originality too plainly for it to be disputed, even by those who care little for his art. But in those days conception of abstract ideas of the imagination embodied in noble form and colour, and expressed in a simple direct manner of painting, were such a contrast to ordinary English artistic efforts, that they were not understood nor cared for, and by many were passed over as only echoes of the "old masters." For many years the poetical feeling in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites was regarded only with ridicule by the public at large, but there was an amount of detail which tickled the curiosity even of those who understood least the main features and aims of the school. Besides, they were a body of artists, and had the force of a brotherhood and the force of Mr. Rossetti's magnetic personal influence at their head. They had also the most eloquent writer who has ever written on art on their side, explaining and praising their intentions and perform-

ances, and steadily their hold on public interest and attention increased. Meantime, after Mr. Watts had painted "Time and Oblivion" and "Life's Illusions," and the world in general had cared very little for them—after he had made an offer to the nation to paint the largest room he could find in London with the history of the world merely for the cost of the colours, and this offer had been rejected, he spent much of his time in painting portraits; and the world settled that Mr. Watts was a portrait painter; the Pre-Raphaelites at that time settled he was a portrait painter, and there are many still who look upon his portrait-painting as his best work. Those who care neither for poetry, symbolism, nor imagination in art, find still much that they can admire in his portraits. Nevertheless, the strength of his genius and the study of his life have been chiefly devoted to imaginative art in which the motives are poems of his own creation. Before such pictures as "Time and Oblivion," "Love and Death," "The Angel of Death," "The Return of the Dove to the Ark," "And the Dove returned no more," and a picture unnamed still on the easel, the world emerging out of chaos, and others, it would be impossible for anyone to suppose portrait-painting had been the principal labour of his life. Nevertheless, even those who care most for his genius feel that an irreparable loss was involved in the want of sympathy with which his first great imaginative efforts were met; that had "Time and Oblivion" and the "Illusions of Life" received the same acknowledgment and admiration when they were exhibited more than thirty years ago that they received when exhibited last winter, Mr. Watts would undoubtedly have carried out in a

complete form the series of designs he offered to the nation which he cared for and longed to execute, and which would have accentuated his real place among the artists of all times, and would have left to England a public treasure of art. Never has he at any time ceased from making poetical designs ; still, the main series of designs have remained, and must now always remain, few and fragmentary compared with what they might have been had he received the necessary encouragement to carry them out as a continuous complete design thirty years ago.

Mr. Rossetti's work echoes back the feeling of our own time, inasmuch as it shows a reverence for the right of the individual to feel and express itself as nature meant the individual to feel ; also in a reverence for all feeling which is purified by an earnest deep reality of passion ; and so far there is a most genuinely moral element in his art. But besides these feelings more particularly belonging to our own times, Mr. Rossetti's art echoes back a sentiment which was the mental atmosphere of his youth and early intellectual training, the spirit of the age of Dante. Unlike Mr. Watts's genius, Mr. Rossetti's painted poetry recalls little of the Greek or Gothic imagination—too individually and assertingly original to be Greek, too measured and definite to be Gothic. It recalls, however, a sentiment of mediæval Italian feeling, to which are added a fervency and jewel-like brilliancy and depth alone equalled in art history by the early German school. Dante, however, was the earliest and chief inspirer of his poetic feeling, and the spirit of the age of Dante governs the attitude of his mind towards his artistic conceptions : that age when a romantic

element appropriated religion as its field, when saints and angels were very real heroes and heroines, and "Paradiso," "Purgatorio," and the "Inferno" were the very definite scenery in which they moved. In a certain way every poet may be said to live more *really* in his artistic life than in the life that is going on about him; but probably no mediæval mind ever had a greater power of living its strongest life in a land of dreams created by a powerful imagination than had Mr. Rossetti, and most readily did he give up living in the atmosphere of the real world for this land of dreams. But what a sense of power and reality he gives us in this land of dreams! what a force of grasp and tangibility in his imaginative creations! With the incense of their beauty and their strength they almost turn our own real life into a shadow. After an hour passed in company with his works, they seem reality, the rest of life a dream. He is a true echo of his poet namesake in that he is so definite in his self-created worlds—so peremptory in his hold on the details of imagined creations. There is a sense in two or three of his earlier designs of actual life forcing its presence and contesting the ground with that world of his imagination, but as he grew older it appears from his work that more and more he shunned that presence; more and more does the work seem to say, "My world shall be the world I choose it to be; no foreign influence shall interfere." Assuredly if seclusion was the price to be paid for an absence of influences disturbing and irritating to that mental absorption in the excitement of brain-weavings, it was not only paid but courted. His poetic imaginings were perhaps too exclusively fed from his own brain-weaving; and notwith-

standing the fibrous, intense character of his genius and his intellect, this continual feeding on himself, this letting no daylight in save through the prism of his own poetical preferences, certainly narrowed the character of his inventions and restrained his poetry within distinct limitations. As far as the intellectual qualities in his work are concerned, we feel a cessation of growth in the intention of the works dated after the year 1870 or thereabout. Never do we lose in any of the work the sense that it is the work of a poet possessed with a rare intellect ; but after the work of that time, though the manipulation is to the end earnest labour, we feel that more or less the intellect was at play, not striving to reach higher levels, but revelling in the power it had readily at command. Some few years before his death, owing to want of health, there is distinctly a waning in the power itself, and the reason for painting seems to have ceased to be an imperative desire to describe the beauty which touched him vividly.

The subject-pictures of earlier days have a strong dramatic interest that results from an earnest moral questioning attitude of mind which allowed of influences outside his own land of poetic dreams to touch him strongly ; but these, unfortunately, were never carried out—except in the case of Dante's dream—on a large scale, or when his powers as a painter were most magnificent. Mr. Rossetti's views in art matters were remarkable for originality, and he had the power to impress on others his original views—even more, he had the power of inspiring others with poetical feeling. He had the most kingly, but not the most godlike, of poetic gifts. He did not throw his

bread upon the waters, leaving it to a higher fate to decide how it was to benefit mankind. He peremptorily insisted that in his way, and his way only, mankind should see and feel. The consequence was that, sooner than meet the results of insubordination, he preferred to have little to do with his own generation, feeling that his best duty was to perfect his own work without allowing any foreign influences to weaken or frustrate its power. The feeling of supersensitiveness to criticism was constitutional ; and when such feelings are matters of health, there remains but one fair course to be taken by the public with regard to such a state of things—to regret it. Had Mr. Rossetti struggled with every fibre of his will, and exposed his work to public criticism, it is believed he would never have become sufficiently insensitive to adverse criticism to have made it possible for his mind to have calmed down to its best work after having been exposed to it. Unquestionably, the first duty of any nature gifted with creative genius is to do full justice to such genius. If a nature is constitutionally weighted with a sensitiveness which makes it impossible for the poet to work out his best power under the conditions of ordinary contact with society, there can be no doubt that such contact should be eschewed. The result in the work of a poet's life should be the only test as to whether he has wisely or unwisely chosen his manner of life, as far as the public is concerned. Most striking is the sense in Mr. Rossetti's work of direct impetus in the genius. There is little or none of the weakening effect of anxiety to be found in his art. What he wished to say he said in a language which he learned with comparative ease—cer-

tainly, as far as colour was concerned—and therefore his art has the power and force that great work done from natural instinct alone can have. Where Mr. Rossetti found a difficulty it was not always overcome; as, for instance, in the flesh-painting of many of the pictures, where the drapery, jewels, and flowers are all marvels of beauty, the colour of the flesh was a failure, and apparently he was content to leave it as a failure. But in his finest work there is a splendour throughout of inspired touch. His colour positively burns with fervent purity and intensity. There is little reticence in its vividness; but there is no need of reticence. His power as a colourist is equal to the want of it. Like an Oriental colourist, he can use the brightest colours and the brightest contrasts, and get the work harmonious and right as a whole. Though this poetic art of Rossetti's is laden with the perfumes of incense rather than of flowers, and burns like the rays of the setting sun, reflected within closed walls, rather than the rays of light which freely illumine the air-spaces of the heavens, it burns too purely from a genuine inborn love to be otherwise than wholesome. Though on the brain of anyone keenly sensitive to the power of colour it has an effect almost entrancing (to use the word literally), assuredly there is no poison in it. It is most certain that Mr. Rossetti's art is saved from an over-balance of the sensuous qualities by the steadying influence of intellectual strength; an intellectual intention sustains and purifies its vivid intensity. Without ostentatiously raising any moral question, it might be interesting to pause for a moment, and ask: Should we be the better, as human beings, for falling powerfully under the influence of

Mr. Rossetti's painted poetry? Distinctly it is felt we should be the better. Inherent in the very nature of all expressions of true greatness is a reason for their existence; and if for their existence, consequently also for their influence. Mr. Rossetti's painted poetry possesses certain inherent qualities of greatness to which no one can be sensitive without being the better. All natures must be the better for an appreciation of beauty in art, which enriches the sensibilities and widens the sympathies towards various phases of nature. But in the atmosphere of Mr. Rossetti's art there is likewise a strong and weird sense of the *dæmon*. The exciting effect which his work produces on many flavours rather of the fire that was lawlessly stolen from heaven than of the rays of the sun that are freely showered on us to refresh and sustain us. The particular kind of excitement produced in many natures is similar to that which Wagner's music creates. Mr. Rossetti takes us into an atmosphere of enchantment and mystery, and we are left trying hopelessly to unravel those mysteries of fate which have always stirred the human brain with the deepest questionings. He loved to paint the beauty in a woman's face which holds in a sphinx-like gaze a secret—the pent-up mystery of fate; but he cared little to link such beauty to any crises in any individual fate. There is a nobility in his painted heroines which is of no date, and would outlast, it is believed, and predominate over, any changes in race, custom, or fashion. What a contrast to the sweet refinement of the English gentlewomen by Sir Joshua Reynolds we saw on the other walls of the Royal Academy last winter! The purity and grace of

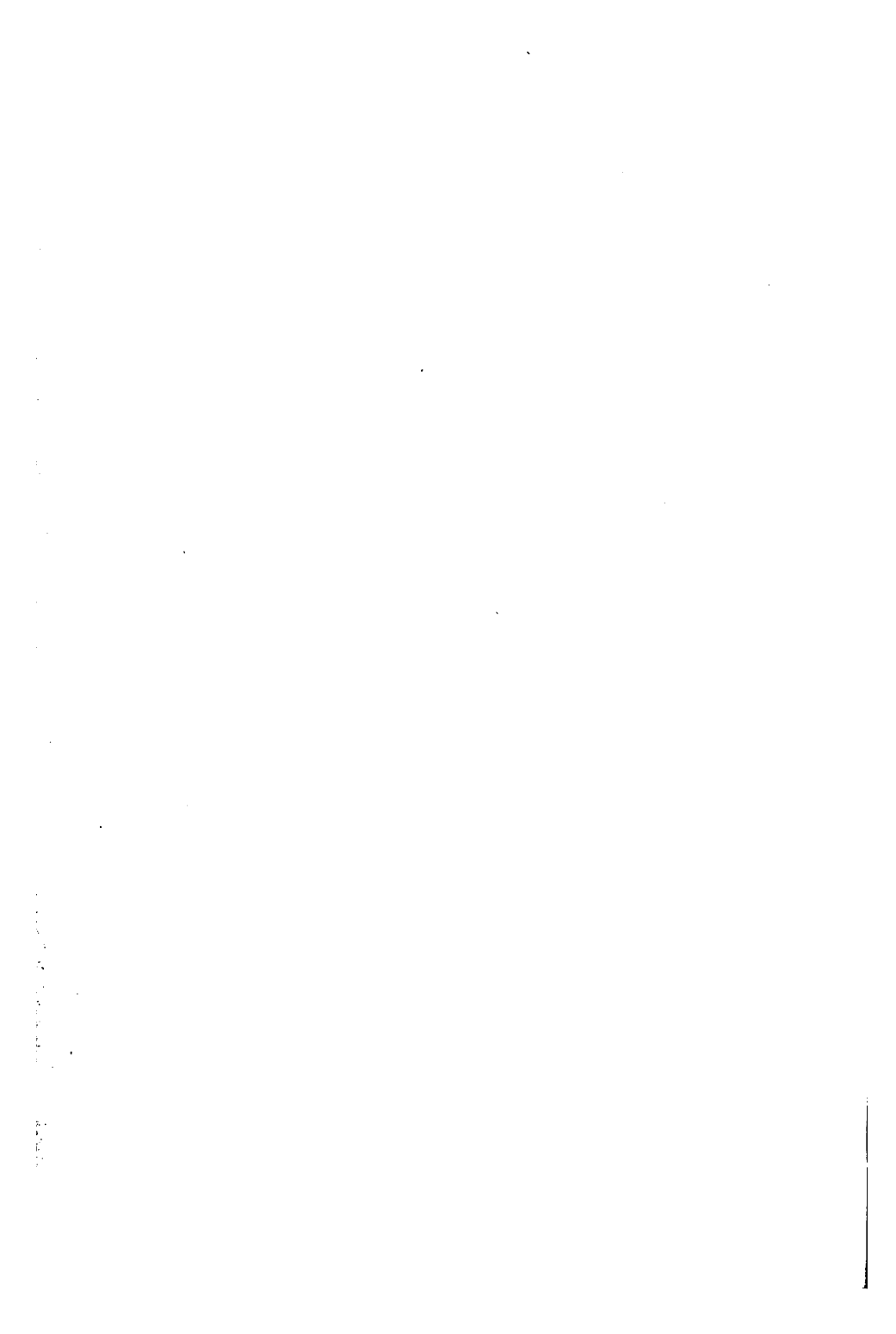
these, however limited and conventional according to the widest intellectual sympathies, have a delicate loveliness which we do not look for in the Rossettis. But these have a greatness of their own, belonging to no special date. A thousand years hence the beauty, such as it is, will appeal as directly as it does now. So far, the intense individuality in Mr. Rossetti's taste, and his antagonism to custom and conventional standards, such as they exist in our modern days, are strengthening elements in his genius. Still, perhaps it is the power in the poetry of actual expression, the fervency and concentration, which make the colour and design so impressive as an actual space of beauty, more than any directly intellectual choice or sentiment in the work, which will secure a lasting and high interest in Mr. Rossetti's painted poetry.

In conclusion, the strongest impression which the works of Mr. Watts and Mr. Rossetti leave on the mind is that they are both deeply interesting as expressions of our own times on a high level of art rarely reached in these days. Cleverness, and the scientific side of art, even genius, so far as accuracy of eye and feeling for the aspect of the outside of nature go, govern the popular appreciation of art; but such qualities do little in adding to real culture. But in Mr. Watts and Mr. Rossetti we have poet-painters who, like Tennyson in verse, Ruskin in prose, and George Eliot in fiction, are exponents of the complicated but highest sensibilities of our own inner lives. In both we have a protest against materialism and against the creed that physical beauty can be severed from mind and spirit, and treated by art in that denuded condition to any good purpose. Once for all, would it not be better to

realize how futile it is for us to try and be pagans of the Greek type? We are not, we cannot be, entirely sincere if we pretend that beauty, unassociated with our own modern moral and spiritual aims, can satisfy us. We can be materialists, many of us are materialists; but pagans we cannot be in that we cannot refine our higher sensibilities to their full nobility as did the Greeks, and omit the influence that Christian spirituality and morality have had on so many past centuries, and on the mental atmosphere that has surrounded us from our infancy. If we allow our taste to become that of materialists, we must give up all hope of any great national art. Never, in any country, at any time, has art sprung into real vitality, except through the serious religious side of a nation's thought. Assuredly the genuine English temperament is not one which can be satisfied with the surface in things. We are slow, but we are constant. If our modern intellectual vein of thought has no very definite dogmatic religion, there is certainly no lack of serious moral fibre, such as is shown, for instance, in our best literature. If we had had the same native instinct and opportunity for rightly judging questions of art that we have for judging questions of literature, we should never have been influenced by foreign standards of taste in art as we are allowing ourselves at present to be influenced. In Mr. Watts's and Mr. Rossetti's art we have everything that is most opposed in feeling to modern French art. We have a profound reverence for noble beauty, and an earnestness in the worship of it which is as religious in its way as was the worship of a Fra Angelico or a Botticelli. Even without any distinct religious creed, it seems a law of

human nature that we should try and justify our noblest natural emotions by legalizing them and aiming at putting into their expression something of prayer and praise. In the painted poetry we have been considering the prayer may be addressed to a somewhat undefined power, and the praise to beauty which is not hallowed as a personal deity ; yet it remains true that a sense of an aspiration towards a higher level of thought and feeling was the inspiring motive, and that in such poetry there is to be found the strength which emanates alone from some of the noblest of human impulses.

IDEAS AND METHODS.



IDEAS AND METHODS.

From the Illustrated Catalogue of the Loan Collection of Paintings by G. F. Watts, R.A., in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May to October, 1885.

IN selecting pictures to send to this exhibition, the artist has chosen those which he considers show most distinctly the character, aim, and intention of his work. It is obvious that among these are some which are far from being finished works—some, moreover, which in all probability he will continue to retouch and endeavour to improve as long as he is able to work. He has never painted any pictures with a view to their being exhibited, his sole object being to express certain moods of thought and feeling through the language of art. He believes that some of the subjects he has chosen deserve all the labour that can be bestowed upon them, and that, though some of the pictures are unfinished, they show the aim toward which he works sufficiently clearly to make them characteristic examples of his art. The "Paolo and Francesca" and the "Orpheus and Eurydice" are, he considers, finally finished; but "Time, Death, and Judgment," "Love and Death," and the "Eve Tempted," he hopes to improve considerably by future work. "Love and Death" was in a more

finished condition at one time, but Mr. Watts had painted out portions in order to improve it before there was any question of sending the pictures to America, and, owing to ill-health during the last three months, had not been able to work upon it as he would have wished to do before sending it.

In none of this artist's work, not even in the painting of portraits, have realistic qualities been the chief aim. The desire has been always to suggest the abstract side of the ideas which the artist has endeavoured to convey through the medium of his art; to suggest a beauty which shall touch the intellectual and finer sensibilities as well as a beauty which alone strikes the eye. Mr. Watts has tried to embody in art an echo of the essential interests of life; something more complete in its suggestiveness to the whole of human nature than mere artistic completeness could ever be. The very nature of this aspiration has excluded the possibility of the kind of finish which is possible in realistic work, because the treatment which is appropriate to the character of his subjects does not befit a realistic study of nature. He has striven, moreover, after that truth in art, which would be less true were it realistically portrayed, inasmuch as such realism would jar with and put out of tune qualities which are essential in imaginative art, in the same manner that a real object coming before us and striking our physical eye will obliterate a vision of memory or imagination, which our mental eye has been dwelling on. The truth which he aims at expressing in his art is that which, being consistent with the unvarying laws of nature, at the same time contains a suggestion of nature's ideality, the truth which

embraces at once nature's obvious facts and immutable laws, and her poetry. To keep a right balance and harmony between structural, scientific truth, and poetical, ideal truth, necessitates, he believes, a treatment the contrary of realistic, one which shall carry the work into an atmosphere congenial with subjects which appeal to the least material part of our nature.

Mr. Watts carries this aim into the most technical qualities of his art, be it painting or sculpture, as well as into the more general treatment. He aims at combining great precision and exactness in rendering the essential truths of form and the delicate gradation and harmony which are found in nature's colouring, with a free, loose touch which gives a palpitating, tremulous quality to the surface of a painting, and approximates, he thinks, nearest to the constant condition of the atmosphere in nature.

In painting portraits he has worked quite as much from a mental vision created by the impression which the nature, career, and character of his sitter has produced on his own mind, than from the personality before him. He endeavours to give us the essential, individualizing characteristics—the very nature of the man; his aspect as it is influenced by his mind, character, and employment, be he poet, artist, statesman, musician, ecclesiastic, or soldier. How the light struck certain forms and colours at a given moment in the steady north light of a studio, producing patches of light and shade, colour and tone upon certain forms and tints, these are the facts alone which many painters of the realistic school aim at recording in painting portraits, and most forcible momentary impressions are thus rendered by the genius of a few;

but Mr. Watts's interest has been excited by the more intellectual conception of portrait-painting, and he has not cared so much to render the physical aspect of his sitters at one given moment as to suggest the impression their appearance would leave on the memory of interested and observant friends.

Portrait-painting he considers the best study any artist can have for ideal work. It makes the artist familiar with the various ways in which form influences expression, and in which different types are suggestive of different classes of nature and feeling.

Where imaginative truth in the conception is aimed at, a wide experience of nature's variety in form and proportion will give not only courage, but power in carrying out the conception. Full emphasis can be given to the individuality of the type which is chosen by the artist to express the sentiment he desires, without running the risk of exaggerating and over-emphasizing expression beyond the limits of nature's own laws of beauty and harmony. In brief, he believes that careful, direct, and honest portrait-painting is the shortest way in which an artist can acquire knowledge, and the best antidote against mannerism. At the same time he strongly disapproves of mixing the spirit of direct portraiture and the sentiment of idealism in the same work, for the reasons before named—namely, a piece of pure portraiture must always jar in a work which is ideal in its sentiment, because what we see or could see any day would not harmonize with a purely imaginative conception. Not that there are no beautiful and characteristic examples of form and colour in the men and women whom we meet about

the world, which might often accord with the type required by an artist to carry out an imaginative conception, or that careful studies from such examples might not be valuable, but that the treatment in the ideal work itself must be different, an appearance of direct portraiture being out of place. He believes that working from models, in a spirit of merely copying faithfully what is before the eye, is destructive to the harmony which ought to exist between an imaginative conception and the carrying of it out in a form of art. He has, therefore, on principle, never used models in the same way that modern artists use them. When he has been struck with any remarkable form or colour, he has endeavoured to master the source of the impression of beauty made on him. He has drawn careful studies in order to find out in what consists the particular variation of the ordinary proportion which has produced the effect on his mind of uncommon beauty; but he has never inserted an actual imitation either of face or form directly into an imaginative work. Necessarily, in following out this principle, he has had to relinquish a certain kind of finish and imitation of nature which those who care for minutiae in painting will miss in his work. The endeavour to carry out this principle has necessitated, as it always must, a very laborious and incessant study of the unvarying laws which govern form and the principles on which are based the effect of line, colour, and tone in nature; for, of course, knowledge is the more necessary the less the artist copies directly from nature. In the technical part of his art Mr. Watts does not strive to produce an effect by painting *dalla primâ*. Certain portraits he has painted in at once. Mr. Leslie

Stephen's portrait was painted in one sitting of 'about two hours ; Lord Shrewsbury's in a sitting of an hour, to show a friend how to begin a head in oil painting ; but in none of his subject-pictures has he ever attempted to produce the effect he desired in a single painting. His feeling has always been the same as that of Titian described by Boschini in the following words : " He (Titian) never did a figure at once (*alla primâ*), and used to say that anyone who improvised (*chechi cantâ all' improvviso*) could never make verses that were profound or really well put together."

The art which Mr. Watts has cared for, which he has thought worthy of the immense labour which really good painting and sculpture involves, is the art which is profound, which contains that element which appeals to the noblest and deepest sensibilities in human nature and to the imagination ; the art which is consonant with great music and great poetry, and which implies an association with great ideas. He feels that realistic art, as modern schools understand it, can never be this. It may amuse, interest, and cultivate the perceptive faculties, but it does not set the mind going, on further and higher lines, and awakens in the mind no thoughts of its own. It merely suggests the effect of a moment seized by the artist with "disinterested curiosity" (the admirable expression used by Matthew Arnold with reference to the work of literary realists), and, finding no echo in the heart and imagination of future generations, it will not live. For we must remember that what is real to us in the art of the past is that element which was the result of efforts of imagination and an expression of deep feeling. The work of Michael Angelo, Titian,

Dante, Shakespeare, are the realities of their time to us. In those faithful portraits found on many tombs throughout Italy ; in all the portraits painted in times when art has really been alive, is there not a record of lovingness in the doing of the work which gives a nobility to the quaintest of physiognomies ? No art or literature which speaks to us vividly out of the past was ever inspired solely by "disinterested curiosity." The artist whom Plato, in his "Phædrus," puts in the first category, in classing conditions of men, is not, surely, one who amuses and interests us for the moment only. The artist whose soul, according to Plato, has come to birth seeing most of truth, should be one, surely, whose influence is deep and lasting ; one who has endeavoured to touch the main-springs of thought and feeling in human nature ; one who can never be in or out of fashion, but always real and living. The art which revives afresh and responds to the wants and feelings of every new generation, is the truly real art—the real artists, those whose lines of thought and feeling were, in essentials, of no special date. The ground they worked on, common ground in all civilized ages for all human nature, their horizon not hemmed in or completely governed by the incidents of any present. Mr. Watts's aim has been to express in his art the thoughts and feelings which have moved him seriously ; to echo in his life's work all that he feels as noblest and best. His is essentially serious art, and any failure there may be in it is certainly not owing to a want of earnestness in the pursuit of the best, or to an inadequacy of aim, or any lack of devotion. The following description in "Boschini" of Titian's manner of painting would not ill describe

Mr. Watts's method, though he adopted it before he knew this description existed : " In truth, Titian is the best of those who have painted. Giacomo Palma the Younger told me he had had the good fortune to enjoy the wise precepts of Titian. That he (Titian) smothered his canvases with a mass of colour that made, so to speak, a bed or base for the touches which he painted over it. And I also have seen him—with resolute strokes and brushes full of colour, filling the same brush sometimes with light red to serve as a half-tint, sometimes with white, rose, black, or yellow—produce, with his amount of knowledge, in four dashes of the brush the promise of a rare figure. In all cases such sketches of his were admired by many who travelled from far to see the best manner in which to enter into the *Pelago della Pittura*. After having made these precious foundations for his pictures he turned the canvases to the wall, and there he left them some months without looking at them. When he wished to paint on them again he first examined them with a critical observation, as if they were his worst enemies, to see what defects he could find in them, and if he found anything which was discordant with the delicacy of the intention of his art, as a beneficent surgeon operates on the infirm, he applied himself to reduce any swelling or superabundance of flesh, or to putting right an arm, if the form of the body structure was not properly adjusted, or putting in its place a foot that had taken a discordant posture, and so on, without pity for its pain. Working in this way, he constructed the figure, and reduced it to the most perfect symmetry that could represent the beauty of nature and of art.

" Having done this, he turned his hand to other work

until the first was dry, and repeated the same process on other pictures. And so he worked from time to time on them till he covered his figures, as it were, with live flesh, perfecting with such wonderful touches that at last only the breath seemed wanting. He never did a figure at once, and used to say that anyone who improvised could never make verses that were profound or really well put together. The essence of the finish of the last touches he put on from time to time with rubs of his fingers in the high lights, approximating them, blending one tint with another, and again with a touch of the finger, putting in a dark stroke in some angle to enforce it, or a touch of rose, like a drop of blood that seems to give life to the surface, the touches creeping on gradually, and so perfecting his animated figures. And Palma attested the fact, that in finishing he painted more with the finger than with the brush."

A few very distinct principles Mr. Watts holds as regards the best method of painting. The ground of all painting should be kept as light as possible, because what is underneath will always have a tendency to show through more and more, the older a picture becomes. The tendency of oil being to blacken as time goes on, a counteracting influence of a light ground is necessary to prevent the picture becoming too dark. Again, in putting on the colour there should never be anything like a smear in painting; an edge, however soft and delicate, should be distinct and clean. Between each painting the colour should be allowed to dry thoroughly and not be retouched till it is quite hard. This, he believes, is the only means by which anything like freshness can be retained in the quality when there is more than one painting. He also believes

that the purer the tint can be put on the better, the modifying and gradating it being left for an after process and only added when the first layer of paint is quite dry, as the pure colour will then always shine through more freshly than when it is mixed with others while wet.

DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE PICTURES SENT TO AMERICA.

"The Happy Warrior;" date, 1884.

To do the most a soldier can do for his country, to die for it, and in dying to see a vision of his love bending over him and kissing his brow, is the meaning the artist intends to convey by the title he has given this picture.

"Not conquered he who sinks upon the field,
Consents to die, consenting not to yield,
Whose steadfast heart death perils cannot move,
True to his faith, his duty, and his love."

"Paolo and Francesca."

The design of this picture was begun many years ago. Since it was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, in the year 1882, the artist has almost repainted it. He now considers it quite finished. The pale spirits of Paolo and Francesca are whirled in the hurricane of the second circle of Dante's "Inferno"—

"Th' Infernal hurricane, that knows no sleep,
Propels the spirits with its ruinous force,
Whirls, smites, torments them in its reckless sweep.

As through the air doves to the cherished nest,
With wings firm set and wide expanded, fly,
By loving instinct borne along, and press'd,
So forth came these from Dido's company,
Speeding their way through the dim air malign,
So potent spake the tender, loving cry."

The artist has endeavoured to record in the countenances of these lovers their hopeless, tender love abiding through endless suffering ; the passion of love imprinted for ever on their souls, to be traced now only through the vaporous atmosphere of a spirit-world. Memory in these pale spirits, retaining a full consciousness of past joy, only adds acuter suffering to present pain.

"No pain can greater prove
Than the remembrance of past joys to wake
When suffering."

Francesca's head leans on her lover's shoulder ; both faces are dimmed by the ashy pallor of a death passed through. With joined hands and arms clasped round each other, they are being whirled like faded leaves before the wind, their drapery caught back into the turbid currents of sulphurous gloom, into "*La bufera infernal*."

Inseparably are Paolo and Francesca linked together. Dante so far respected their passion that, in ordaining their punishment, he spares them at least the pain of separation. Still he means that their endless suffering should be so ever present, the joy of the past so vividly remembered, and yet so irrecoverable, that while Francesca is describing how their love awakened, Dante is so overcome with pity that he swoons as one dead.

"The whiles this sad one spirit, th' other so
Wept, that heart-struck with pity's tender force,
I swooned, as if in life's expiring throe,
And fell, as falls upon the earth a corse."

This picture, and the "Fata Morgana," are the only two the artist has ever painted, which are simply illustrations of written poems.

"Orpheus and Eurydice."

This picture was painted some years ago, but it has been nearly repainted since it was exhibited in France and in the Grosvenor Gallery, in 1882, the object in so doing being to get rid of everything approaching to black in the colouring.

Orpheus, too impatient to wait, turns back, contrary to his promise, to see if Eurydice is following him out of Hades. Eurydice is instantly struck and caught back into the shades of the spirit world. She does not die nor swoon, but her fate snatches her from the light of the world she was emerging into, back into the gloom and twilight of Hades. In vain, letting fall his lyre, Orpheus encircles her with his arm; the powers that foretold her fate, should he once turn till he passed beyond the gates of Hades, have stricken her.

"Time, Death, and Judgment" (commenced many years ago).

Figures of heroic size represent these three powerful agencies, Time, Death, and Judgment. Time is painted as one possessed of unalterable youth, nude to the waist, holding forward a scythe in his right hand.

Death is represented by the figure of a woman, amply draped. They are wading hand in hand together through the waves of the stream of life. The eyes of Time are stony, with an unchangeable, never-failing youth; not cruel, only heedless of what may happen as he inevitably presses forward, pausing neither to inflict, to spare, nor to mend. He is represented as advancing in strides marking the recurrence of conditions—the hours, days, months, and years. Death, his inevitable mate, glides silently by his side, doing her work at unexpected, uncalculated moments. Her lap is full of gathered flowers, buds, blossoms, faded leaves, all together, fulfilling as she goes, her mysterious mission of gathering to herself the young, the old, the middle-aged, indiscriminately, it would seem, but with the unswerving certainty of fate, irrespective of all human calculations or desires. Behind, in the wake of Time and Death, flies the no less inevitable Nemesis, her face hidden by the outstretched arm which carries the deciding scales. In her other hand she grasps the avenging sword, and her flame-coloured drapery flies, like a track of fire, back into blue space, where revolve the golden sun, and the pale crescent moon, “Earth’s dead child.” This is a picture the influence of which would probably be best felt were it seen in a niche by itself, in a cloister or a church, not in an art gallery or museum. The artist has allowed this design to be carried out in a mosaic which is to be placed on the Church of St. Jude’s, Whitechapel, in one of the poorest and most over-crowded districts in the east of London.

The subject of this picture, though one of the simplest, and expressing the most plain and most ever-present truths, ought, the painter has thought, to be

one of the most impressive, and on no other picture has he bestowed more thought or labour. The treatment is broad, and suggests size. The figures are sculpturesque in character, not hewn out of smooth, delicate marble, but out of a rough, enduring adamant. They are beings who move in larger conditions than those encircling humanity; creatures who view a wider horizon than that which bounds our vision. Therefore, these powers, though imagined in the form of human beings, intentionally do not suggest the men and women we see about us, but a Titanic race belonging to larger spheres than those of our earth.

"The Mid-day Rest."

Painted in 1864, in the garden of the old Little Holland House. The picture of the Dray Horses is, perhaps, the only purely historical work which the artist has painted. The race of splendid animals, of which these two are fine examples, will, in all probability, soon cease to exist. We have a future before us of steam, electricity, and machinery, which will do their work for us. We have here a record of a typically English sight. In painting the forms of this grand-looking class of horse, the artist has endeavoured to suggest the sense of repose and latent power, which is, or rather has been, one of the finest characteristics of our English life, but which is fast waning and becoming part of our past. We are being hurried into a cosmopolitan eagerness and excitability, and every year, more and more, are the restless mites and midges of the sunshine teasing us into a desire to emulate other nations by striving after a sort of cosmopolitan

culture, and by the endeavour to make our habits and manners vivacious and demonstrative, like those of our friskier French neighbours. But round the huge creatures and their stolid driver, painted in this picture, lingers still the atmosphere of peaceful security and quiescence, and the phlegm of old-fashioned English life, suggesting a certain grandeur of reposefulness and size. Before all landmarks of old customs and habits have died out, before another generation has arisen, a quite new Pharaoh, "who knew not Joseph," the artist has thought it well to make a historical record in painting of such a characteristic phase of English life, which, moreover, gives scope for a study of the magnificent form to be found in the Brewer's Dray Horses.

"Love and Life" (the companion picture to "Love and Death").

Begun in February, 1884; finished in June, 1884. The design was made in 1883. Love is represented by the winged figure of a youth, and Life by that of a young girl, who, clinging to Love, is being guided by him over the rough places of a rocky precipice which both are ascending together. Love is leading the way, and helping Life, by his support and tenderness, to climb the difficult path—emblematic of the struggling conditions which, more or less, are the portion of all human existence. The half-extended wings of Love shade the rays of light from beating too fiercely on the delicate figure of Life. Love's footsteps can be traced on the rocky ascent by the daisy flowers which have sprung up in his track. The atmosphere of the picture is bathed in the gold of light and the blue of space.

As the figures ascend, the air becomes more golden with light. Love, while helping to endure and overcome the struggles of existence, leads upward into purer, brighter conditions. The truth which the artist has tried to embody in this picture, is that Love, in its widest, most universal sense—in the sense of charity, sympathy, and unselfishness—raises Life upward; that humanity is helped by tender aid on the one hand, and by tender trust on the other. He has purposely kept the picture light and simple, and the figure representing Life fragile and slight. Poor humanity is so frail a thing, in the midst of what Carlyle calls the “Immensities,” without the strength which Love alone can give!

“Ariadne;” lent by Louisa, Lady Ashburton.

The particular time in the story of Ariadne which the artist has chosen, is later on than that chosen by Titian in his famous picture of “Bacchus and Ariadne,” in the National Gallery in London. Oblivious of her union with Bacchus, Ariadne is rapt in a reverie while looking out into the blue mists of distant sea, into which the deserter Theseus has vanished. A sense of queenliness is meant to be expressed in her form and attitude. Her arm falls listlessly by her side, and she does not heed the touch of the bright maiden who comes through the wood behind her from the gay train of Bacchus to remind her of the revels, and to summon her again to join the jovial company. The panthers that belong to the rout of Bacchus play at her feet.

"Chaos ;" date, 1882.

This sketch was sent because the design of it is the first in a series of designs which, in their entirety, the artist had hoped to carry out as the principal work of his life. His intention was to describe the story of mankind as it comes to us through biblical, mythical, poetical, and verifiable history, viewing it from the standpoint of the present time. This he designed with the intention of carrying it out on an heroic scale, round the walls of a great hall or room, and would gladly have done so without remuneration, had the opportunity been afforded him. That it was not, is the great regret of his life ; for not only the encouragement, but the means of carrying out this work being denied him, he feels he has never been able to express himself fully in his own special language of art. He feels he has missed giving utterance to the conceptions which were the best he was capable of, in the form which would have best suited his powers, and that, instead of having produced a complete work, only fragments remain to show the direction of his scheme.

In the design before us we have what may stand as the opening chapter of the book. On the left is represented the period of violence, the upheaving and disturbance previous to the regular course of things establishing itself in our planet. This passes in the middle of the picture into an indefinite period, a vaporous uncertainty of atmosphere, of unborn creations. Light is still veiled by mists, and air and waters mingle. Here and there a figure in the swollen tides marks the beginning of the strides of time. In the third part of the picture, colossal forms, silent and

quiescent, symbols of mountain ranges, suggest an established state of things. The current of time, in the middle part of the composition, indicated by detached figures, is now a continuous stream. The artist's desire was not merely to repeat the incidents of history as recorded by the poets and as painted by the old masters, but to interpret the story of the world from his own point of view, including in the interpretation a modern vein of thought and feeling, and regarding the past from the more comprehensive area of modern acquirement.

Taking a large view of the important incidents of the world's history, such part of it as could be expressed in a pictorial form, he hoped to have painted the salient points on which turned the changes and progress of the world as we know it, and to have described the past by the light of the present; in so doing to create in his own time an art, comprehensive enough in its own character to affect the interests of all times, yet special enough to be stamped with the fervour of contemporary interest. This would have led the composition into the story of human life. A few fragments of the scheme can be seen in the designs of the "Creation of Eve," the "Eve Tempted," "Eve Repentant," the "Newly Created Eve," and "Cain."

LITTLE HOLLAND HOUSE GALLERY.

"The Creation of Eve."

Their work done, the angels are rising into light, singing a chorus of praise. One is touching Adam with a finger to arouse him from his torpor. The

companion picture, of which a photograph has been sent, is "The Denunciation of Adam and Eve" after their trespass, where the descending angels contrast with the ascending angels in this picture.

"Uldra;" painted in 1884.

Uldra is a nymph-like fairy, a Scandinavian myth, who is supposed to be only visible through the rainbow of dewy mists and fountains. This is, perhaps, the best example of an atmospheric effect in a figure-picture among Mr. Watts's works. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to procure "The Carrara Mountains," or the "Island of Cos" for this exhibition, as the owners would not lend them. This is to be regretted, as they are the most finished examples of painted atmosphere which the artist has made in land and sea subjects.

"Love and Death."

Begun about the year 1869, worked on at intervals till within the last nine months. This picture was at one time in a more finished condition, but the artist painted out portions of it in order to improve it, and, owing to ill-health during the last three months, he has not been able to retouch it, as he wished to do, before sending it. The idea of this picture first came to the artist's mind about fifteen years ago. He was then painting the portrait of a man who, while still young, and showing every promise of becoming one of the most distinguished men of his time, was attacked by a lingering and fatal illness. The portrait

was continued at intervals. At each sitting the artist felt the disease had progressed a stage nearer the end. Everything that love could do opposed it in vain. Out of sympathy for the sorrow of those who had striven so hard and so fruitlessly to keep Death at bay, arose the idea of the subject of this picture, "Love and Death." The draped figure, whose back alone we see, who is meant to represent a messenger of Death, is entering through the doorway of a home where Love has reigned. Love meets this "shining one" (as Bunyan expressed it) on the threshold, and thrusts out his arm to oppose the entrance of his enemy. The solemn figure moves forward notwithstanding, as it were inevitably, rather than as if forcing a way ; a fatal doom, against which the struggles of Love are in vain. Death overshadows his figure, except where a few bright rays of colour still light on his brow, on the roses which wreath it, and on the arm which clings still to the doorway. In his anguish he gazes appealingly up into the face of the awful stranger, while with his outstretched arm he attempts to resist advance. But, with wings crushed, he is thrust aside, and thrown back on the garlands of roses which grow round the entrance of his dwelling. Though we do not see his enemy's face, we are not meant to feel it would be hideous, however awful. This messenger is but the unswerving agent to an all-powerful will which rules over poor humanity, and, in the fulfilment of whose laws the wounding of human feeling, however deep, and pure, and strong, counts as no obstacle. The intention in this picture has been to embody in a pictorial expression a suggestion of the world-old mystery, the conflict between Love and

Death ; to endeavour to transmit by form and colour a vision of an idea ; to suggest, in the figure of Love, beauty, tender passion, and the struggle of unavailing anguish ; and in the figure of Death, solemnity, power, irresistible and unconquerable ; also an echo of that mystery which veils the unknown. Intentionally has the character and style of the work been kept as monumental as possible ; in every sense the very reverse of realistic.

"Found Drowned."

Under an arch of Waterloo Bridge, in London, on the mud which has been left dry by the receding tide, lies a suicide. The subject is identical with that of Hood's poem, but was not taken from it, but suggested by an incident seen by the artist.

"The Genius of Greek Poetry ;" painted in 1878.

The intention of the artist in painting this picture has been to endeavour to render the significance, the local tone, and especially the anthropomorphic character of the Genius of Greek poetry. The prominence humanity held in the Greek mind, the association of the effects in nature, and the entire conditions in the world with humanity being so strong that all effects and moods of nature weave themselves in his imagination into semi-human existences ; the winds and currents, the hours of the days, the earth, sea, and air, all natural phenomena he invests with human forms, attributes, and moods. The figure seated on a rock is intended to be an emblem of

this Greek Genius, not a Greek man. The whole atmosphere of the picture is steeped in warm, golden light, shadowed by blue haze on the sea and sky, but deeper and more glowing, on the foreground, figure, and rocks, indicative of the enjoyment of southern warmth and light and air. This picture would be more easily explained were the pendant picture beside it, "The Genius of Northern Poetry," darker, more mysterious, less human in attributes than the Greek Genius.

"Cain."

Designs for the life-size composition in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House, Royal Academy.

The figure of the slain Abel lies on the ground while his sacrifice rises in a pillar of flame straight up to Heaven. The standing figure of Cain is overshadowed by the avengers who swoop down upon him. These may be understood as the voices of conscience.

The "Eve Tempted."

This design is one of a series of three, of which photographs have been sent to this exhibition in order to show the relative place of the picture before us. In the first design, "The Newly Created Eve," the figure rises column-like in praise and delight at her creation. In the second, "Eve Tempted," she bends forward toward the fruit which is tempting her, not plucking it, but allowing herself to be allured by the seductive fragrance; and in the third she has thrown herself against the stem of a tree, her hands clasped above her head, her figure shrouded by her hair. The first and

third were not sufficiently finished to send. All three figures are colossal in size, and represent a type which may suggest the mother of all the human race. The colour in the "Newly Created Eve" is glowing and golden; in the "Eve Tempted," more intricate and jewel-like; in the "Eve Repentant," shaded blue and saddened into twilight.

"When Poverty comes into the Door, Love flies out of the Window;" painted in 1879.

Love is poised on the sill of the open window with outspread wings, just starting to fly away, for the door is being opened by haggard Poverty, followed in his wake by the wolf Hunger. Through the opening, dry dead leaves are whirling into the room before him. Meantime a little lady is still futilely playing on a couch with her rose-leaves. Her cupboard door, with broken hinge, hangs untidily above her; her work lies upset, all strewn and tangled on the floor; idleness and carelessness accounting for the appearance of the ugly visitor. The picture is on a smaller scale than that on which the artist usually works, and is painted chiefly in water-colour.

"The Dove that Returned Not Again;" painted in 1878.

This is the companion picture of "The Dove returning to the Ark," which, owing to its being painted on panel, could not be sent to America. The flood is subsiding, and the dove has found a branch of a tree to rest on. The ivy-leaves that cling to it are sodden

and brown, and, caught in a fork of the stem, are remnants of drapery and jewels, tokens of the flood. The cloudy vapours have lifted ; there is an awakening of light and colour, still misty and young, like the blue eye of a child when it first wakes into the life and movement of the day. Nature is readjusting herself to a brighter, happier mood. It is a contrast to its companion picture, where the monotony of the heavy swollen tides, receding away to the horizon, is only varied by the changes which distance gives to the wide spaces of the waters and to the gray of a sullen, hopeless sky. In this picture the dove is seeking a refuge in the shelter of the ark ; in the one before us the dove has found its home under the wider shelter of the sky.

DECORATIVE WORK OF BURNE-
JONES AND WALTER CRANE.



DECORATIVE WORK OF BURNE-JONES.¹

IN some respects the present exhibition will be considered by many persons the most interesting which has taken place at the Grosvenor Gallery. It certainly proves the excellence of an original modern school of decoration. It will also explain the cause of a certain mannerism in the work of those artists who are prominent in this school. This mannerism is very unsympathetic to many English lovers of art, particularly when it appears in those pictures which are intended to be complete as pictures, and in which there is to be traced the habit of treating line and colour decoratively.

The decorative quality in art, as opposed to the quality of realistic portraiture, has been only recently developed in England. It is still an element neither widely understood nor really appreciated when it appears prominently in pictures, though the world is becoming more alive to the interest of its character, when it is used distinctly in its own line for decorative purposes only. There are certain qualities entailed by the decorative treatment which offend the popular idea of what represents the truth of Nature in art. Flatness in the general treatment of the design is the most salient of these, and is the least popular ac-

¹ Exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery in 1881.

cording to the old-fashioned standard of English taste. And yet this flatness is indispensable in any decorative painting when, as in the case of nearly all fresco painting, it has to harmonize with architectural design. As Mr. Watts explained, in his paper read at the Social Science meeting, there must be nothing in the light and shade in mural painting which shall suggest a "hole" or a prominence. The design must decorate an even surface, and must in no way interfere with the general light and shade which the architect intended the wall to take ; and it should therefore not have the deceptive roundness suggested, that is more permissible in a picture in which a distinctly imitative portrait of Nature is attempted. Painting in fresco is doubtless the best way of decorating a wall ; the dry, flat quality of the material being exactly suited to the evenness of surface required, and not producing the shiny lights and black shades which we see in oil-painting. Ordinary fresco painting, however, for practical reasons, seems difficult to use in England with permanent success. But the same qualities required for wall painting have been carried into various forms of art, and have introduced a thorough reform in the treatment of line, tone, and colour as used for decorative purposes.

Mr. William Morris, Mr. Burne-Jones, and Mr. Walter Crane have given us standards which are changing the whole principle of decorative work. Perhaps it might be truer to say they are giving original principals where, in England, none before practically existed. They have in their work finely distinguished those qualities of truth and beauty in nature which can be best rendered in the treatment of decoration, and have used the power of original creative minds to aid

the inventions of their art. The necessity of a quality of flatness in the treatment of design makes the prominence of certain other qualities the more indispensable—for instance, the beauty of line in itself, and also beauty in the arrangement and grouping of lines together; the purity of the different tints of colour in themselves, and the just proportion of spaces of each in order to complete a harmonious whole. For, if the truths and beauties in nature are to be suggested by a few of their qualities only, condensed into an abstract form, necessarily there must be more of suggestion in the treatment of the limited means used in order to produce the desired effect. In other words, the fewer the materials used to produce an effect, the more indispensable it is to use those few in their fullest power.

In this exhibition, at the Grosvenor Gallery, there are examples of design by Mr. Burne-Jones and Mr. Walter Crane which are masterpieces in the qualities necessary for the highest kind of decorative art. Mr. Burne-Jones has sent work, the quality and quantity of which is astounding, when we think of the elaborated pictures which year after year he carefully finishes. One quality, which, notwithstanding the many excellences of his beautiful work, some persons miss in Mr. Burne-Jones's oil pictures, cannot, we think, reasonably be felt by anyone in these designs, so as to detract from their interest. The quality which we refer to is derived from a sense of structural solidity, and power of suggesting the solidity of objects by line or paint on a flat surface; and it is a sense which some painters possess to the same degree as sculptors. The drawings and paintings of Michael Angelo pre-eminently possess

the quality which we mean, and which we have often heard confounded with the sense of fine form and beautiful drawing, by those who cite Michael Angelo as the perfection of both. But, taking Phidias as the standard of excellence in form, it requires only an average sense of beauty to discover that the forms of Michael Angelo are anything but perfect; and that, however fine the expressional beauty may be in his drawing, it is the sense of structural power, and the meaning which the sense of solidity of form gives to his lines—not the perfection of those forms themselves, nor the intrinsic beauty of line—which impresses grandeur and artistic power. The great Venetian School of Painting carried this solid quality, of what we may call building up the form structurally, into their method of manipulating paint. They added to this, magnificence of colour; and their art got far away from those special qualities which are prominent in the early Italian wall painting and mosaic work; and in so doing, while they gained much, they also lost much. The English Decorative School has gone back to the earlier feeling; and it is the quality of solidity which those who are not in sympathy with Mr. Burne-Jones's work miss in his painting. The absence of this quality is felt, even by those who delight in his art, to produce a kind of limpness—a want of the sense of his having grasped the form as solid; of his having failed to give full definiteness to the surfaces and full vigour to the expression of form.

For years we have heard it said that Mr. Burne-Jones could not draw; and though, after his great skill as a draughtsman has been indisputably shown since the Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions have been held, few dare to repeat such a Philistinism, yet the want of the

quality above described is still felt by many, when it is a question of his finished pictures. But, in the designs in this exhibition, there is no need for such a quality : and as work treated decoratively, it is very complete and very beautiful. Not forgetting the whole range of mediæval and ancient art, we do not think we are rash in asserting that no other artist hand has ever worked line-drawing with more tender, exquisite grace or feeling for completeness in design. No smallest stroke but is in tune with the whole. Like waves of sound in lovely music, the lines are grouped in curves melting into one another, and a flowing rhythm is in each line poised by a rare sense of beauty, yet so distinctly designed, that each has its own distinct beginning and end. This grace of line runs through and dominates, without destroying the individuality in the character of each form. Whether it be in the human face or human figure, or in the drawing of hair, of drapery, of leafage, or of wings, it is equally perfect, and gives a distinction and refinement which has but one drawback. It makes all other work about it appear more or less vulgar. The variety which a curve gives to a line, gradation gives to a tone ; and the same sense of beauty, and delicacy, and distinction which is remarkable in Mr. Burne-Jones's outline, is none the less so in the toning of the spaces within the outline. The colour, when there is any, of these designs, is lovely, and is arranged in an interesting and original manner. The sentiment of this art is a more difficult subject to discuss than the obvious excellences of the more purely artistic qualities : for whereas the feeling of it to one person suggests the tender, sweet refinement of perfect purity, to another it suggests a morbid sentimentality ; and it is needless

to argue the point as to what is right taste and wrong taste, for the argument merely ends in the reiteration of individual taste. The decision must be left to the sifting process of time—a process which all work that outlives its own generation sooner or later undergoes. But it is certain that a happy consistency tunes the feeling in Burne-Jones's work with the manipulation of it, creating complete harmony both in treatment and in sentiment. Consciously, or unconsciously, he carries out the best of all artist mottos, "Paint nothing you do not love, and love nothing you do not paint." We might add, that towards the mystic and romantic side of poetry he seems to have a keener sympathy than towards any other.

The picture which occupies the centre of the end wall of the room in the Grosvenor Gallery, which is more than half filled by Mr. Burne-Jones, is his most striking work in the exhibition, owing to the elevated character of the subject, the great finish of the workmanship, and the peculiarly original colouring. It is called "Dies Domini," and a quotation from a verse in the Book of Daniel is cited, *Et ecce quasi filius hominis veniebat*. Our Lord is seated, surrounded by multitudes of Angels, of which four uplifted faces alone are seen between the overlapping crowd of wings—perfect as examples of design of line at once intricate, distinct, and beautiful. Here and there, the light of the halos round other hidden Angels' heads breaks through the forest of feathers, and lights with a rosy hue the blue tone of the picture—a softened blue, suggestive of the lights and shades of night. A breath of holy mysticism seems to inspire the beauty of this work, to be recalled to the memory more as a vision

than as a picture. Very different in character of subject are the two pictures on the west wall, the "Sea Nymph" and the "Wood Nymph." These are striking as perfect examples of the fairy-loving element in the artist's fancy, and the happy and complete way in which he unites simplicity and inventiveness, weaving into these visions of fairyland all the possible beauty compatible with a conventional, decorative treatment. For instance: the "Sea Nymph" is riding the most conventional waves; but, in their leaping curves, there is a true suggestion of breezy exhilaration. The swing of the sea's full tide and the wild look of mermaid freedom in the nymph's face are suggested by simple, direct means; but they are perfected by a delicate detail here and there, such as the small lip of white foam turning back where the body of the mermaid breaks the resisting wave, and the exquisite drawing of the fish—which are marvels of foreshortened curves. The "Wood Nymph" has a most winning face, and looks earnestly and seriously at you in a manner which haunts you long after you have left her.

We regret that our space will not allow a description of the other designs by this master; but, as our chief desire has been to induce those who wish to study the laws of design and the decorative treatment of painting in their completest and most refined form, to learn from the work of Mr. Burne-Jones which is here exhibited, perhaps enough has been already said.

On another occasion, we hope to notice Mr. Walter Crane's designs, and some of the work of other contributors to the Gallery.

DECORATIVE WORK OF WALTER CRANE.

In our first notice of the Grosvenor Gallery Exhibition we tried to analyze those qualities in Mr. Burne-Jones's decorative work which make it remarkable. We shall now endeavour to do the same with respect to Mr. Walter Crane's work.

It is interesting to trace the difference which exists in the genius of these two masters of decorative design; and such a comparison is valuable, because the works of each artist have distinctively strong points of their own. As we noticed in our first review of these designs, lines and coloured spaces treated flatly have to produce in decorative art the complete effect desired by the designer. The amount of suggestion and meaning which is put into these simple expressions of art, in a decorative design, is a test of the ingenuity of the invention.

Mr. Burne-Jones possesses a sense of beauty of line (in a certain quality which corresponds in drawing to the rhythm and musical quality in written poetry) which we believe is unequalled by any master, past or present. The power of expressing beauty by line, united with a reposeful serenity in the sentiment of his art, must secure for it a high and lasting place in the judgment of the future; even if the charm of colour, the refinement in texture and surface, and the complete finish in the workmanship, which are the obvious qualities that fascinate most of his admirers, be left out of consideration. But, with one exception, neither in these designs, nor in his complete pictures, can we

recall any dramatic power. (The exception we allude to was in his "Merlin and Vivian," where in the picture itself the life seemed to be ebbing away from the face of Merlin.) Mr. Burne-Jones's decorative work reflects in line and tint, the perfection and finish of forms and colours inherent in Nature, in her passive moods, when not agitated by any passing movement or active passion.

Mr. Crane's work, on the other hand, reflects the less complete and finished conditions, the more varying and dramatic sentiment in nature which accompanies action, growth, vitality. In his most purely decorative designs, something is always going on ; some distinct action is always taking place. This sense of movement creeps into his slightest decoration, into every border with which he frames his illustrations, even to the fly-leaves of his books. But it is the combination of this sense of the dramatic with the sense of fine balance in placing lines in original, and yet satisfactory arrangements, which secures to Mr. Crane's work an unique position as illustrative decoration. His remarkable success in harmonizing in an original manner, and inventing combinations of flat tints of colour, is the most striking and popular excellence in his work. But the success with which he expresses the meaning and form of his designs is equally exceptional, and can easily be proved by a study of his book, "Mrs. Mundi's Ball," in which the designs are uncoloured, and which is, nevertheless, one of the best things Mr. Crane has done.

It is this combination of the dramatic with the decorative power which makes his expression of facts, in the most abstract form, entertaining ; while it makes

his dramatic expression always agreeable as design; the most violent action in it being controlled, so to speak, by the design in which it is framed. The interest created by this power of suggesting action, and yet retaining beauty of design, is enhanced by the charm of a sense of ease in the way in which the work is evidently manipulated. The mechanical part seems to be executed with a freedom as of writing. There is an absence of all conscious effort in the work. It has a refreshing quality, suggestive of wholesome, pleasant growth and vitality. Ease and freedom, and a consequent freshness, are qualities often found in modern art, but at the price of incompleteness in design, and of vagueness in the expression of form. But Mr. Crane sacrifices neither completeness nor precision in order to obtain the charm of ease and spontaneity, which is, nevertheless, a salient excellence in his art. In the truest sense we do consider Mr. Crane's work healthy. No self-consciousness is to be traced in the feeling of it anywhere. The works of Mr. Burne-Jones and of Mr. Walter Crane possess one rare excellence in common. This is the generous profusion of detail with which they both enrich the beauty of their designs. The fact, that the sense of great profusion and intricacy in the detail improves rather than mars the effect of a design as a whole, proves the existence of a rare instinctive power of arrangement, and of a right selection in the designer, as well as the more obvious quality of ready invention. In the designs of both these artists, the secret of the charm of manner in which the central idea is decorated by details (details sufficiently detached by individual characteristics to have an interest of their own, and sufficiently governed

by the main design to keep their places as accessories), is owing to the sympathy which both artists evidently feel in a rare degree towards that beautiful quality of generosity and profusion in Nature herself. The pretty things which fill their backgrounds and surround their figures are evidently drawn from the love for the beauty in the pretty things, and not from any theory that such and such lines come right for the design. But, both artists naturally possess such a fine instinct for design, that the lines do come right, and that in the best of ways, without any apparent effort, whilst looking as if in no other way could they be designed and appear so right.

Before describing in any detail Mr. Crane's work, which is exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, we must mention that there is often an inequality of beauty in his drawing of the human figure which puzzles many competent judges and many of his enthusiastic admirers, and blinds many critics to nearly all the excellences in his work.

Critics, as a rule, think it proves less stupidity to be blind to the merits and beauties of modern art, which distinctly possesses an element of originality, than to be blind to the mere shortcomings in such work. But we believe that the higher class of artists take another view. They think that a finer sense and a more deliberate judgment is required to explain merits than to discover faults. Still, though it is nothing new to find critics and artists not only disagreeing in their opinions, but disagreeing as to the basis on which such opinions should be formed, and though we may set aside all personal sympathy and admiration, yet, considering his European celebrity, we cannot help being

somewhat surprised at the way in which Mr. Crane's work is so often handled by the critics. There is hardly a book-stall in any French railway station on which some of his children's books do not find a place. Even five years ago, the present writer saw one of them at a railway station in a distant part of Brittany, the text being in French. A few years ago, a round robin was signed by all the art professors in Vienna, and forwarded to Mr. Crane, expressing the admiration of the signatories for his illustrations. The same judgment was verbally expressed to Mr. Crane by the Berlin professors, through one of the London masters of art. That a true and conscientious artist should be able to kindle enthusiasm in foreign societies, and yet do careful and thoughtful work which, when exhibited, is received only with scorn by the all-wise "Sir Oracles," the art critics of most of the English newspapers will, doubtless, puzzle the more deliberate judgment of the future.

It is worth while, in a review of Mr. Crane's work, to consider carefully what there is in it which exposes its author to such maltreatment ; though nothing, in our opinion, can justify the sweeping condemnation which some of his pictures have received.

As a rule, when Mr. Crane enlarges his pictures, or treats them in a more finished manner, he fails to reproduce the beauty and grace which are so charming in his figures, when he draws them on a small scale and in a decorative manner. (The beautiful figures in the large picture of the "Renaissance of Venus," exhibited in the first Grosvenor Gallery collection, are exceptions.) Now, such failure cannot arise from the absence in Mr. Crane's artistic sense of a feeling for the beauty

and meaning of the human figure ; otherwise, his drawings of it on a small scale would not show in so rare and remarkable a degree an appreciation of such beauty. We believe the failure arises from the absence of what may be called an added sense, an acquired sense, which is developed in some artists so strongly that it becomes almost like a natural instinct—a sense only to be acquired by constantly seeing the figure and studying from it. The Greeks possessed this sense pre-eminently ; probably half unconsciously, from the influence which the sight of the human figure, in a healthy athletic form constantly before them, produced. Such an influence cannot exist in our climate, and with our modern habits ; but artists do their best to make up for its absence by working constantly from models in their studios. This, as a rule, is an uninspiring, if not an actually depressing process, and results often in giving to modern art a flavour of the studio, which overwhelms all other suggestion in the work. Nevertheless, working from models has given to some artists that subtle sense without which the figure cannot be fully drawn : and the results of this process have given to the eye of the public a standard of finish, in the detail and surface of the drawing of the figure, which makes any work not possessing it appear meagre and unnatural, even to the eye of an ordinary spectator who is ignorant of art.

Perhaps one of the greatest charms in Mr. Crane's work is an utter absence of any suggestion in it of the studio life. In his imagination there seems imaged a beautiful world of nature, which is always ready to express itself in line and colour, and to add a charm of its own to the telling of any story, to decorate any

incident with the loveliness and grace of fairy palaces, woods, streams, and flowers; a brain-weaving, which seems always ready to flow with the abundance and variety of Nature herself, not in her work-a-day, weary aspect, not with a straining after beauty under difficulties, a sense of which overshadows our art schools and studios, but as a bird sings and as animals play when they are happy—in fact, as a perfectly joyful expression of a natural condition. To spoil or restrain this (in our day an exceptional quality in the expression of art) would be to repress some of the most truly poetical utterances of which our age can boast in art. Nevertheless, we cannot but regret that neither in a studio, nor elsewhere, has Mr. Crane acquired that power which would give the same beauty and charm to the figures in his larger and more finished pictures, as to those in his children's books and in his decorative work. We do not at all agree with those who think they have solved the difficulty which this inequality produces in the minds of several experienced judges, by deciding that Mr. Crane's genius is limited to decoration, and to decoration only. His dramatic power is distinct, and rises sometimes to the tragic, as in the illustrations of "Blue-beard;" also, in the sentiment of the tone in his picture of the "Syrens," in the exquisite opalesque tints, is an example of a truly imaginative treatment of tone and colour which stretches far beyond a purely decorative power.

The only explanation which we feel to be satisfactory for the absence of beauty in the figures which have cost most time and labour, and the presence of it where the work seems to have been executed

with the ease of writing, is this. The expression of Mr. Crane's art is in character too spontaneous and too rapid for him to be able to dwell long enough on the structural form, and the delicate, and, to the ordinary eye, almost insensible details, the rendering of which can alone suggest in the drawing of the human figure, when treated in a finished manner, its completeness and full nobility. It seems to us that Mr. Crane, not having acquired in a natural way a knowledge of the human figure—a way which would have made such knowledge like the added instinct possessed by the Greeks—he cannot force himself to a study which involves much that is distasteful to his truest art feeling. One fact is evident, that it is no want of conscientious industry which produces any shortcoming in his work ; but apparently he feels that to be true to his best artistic self, he cannot adopt the usual academical view of study.

Among the profound truths which the French writer, Joubert, worded in such a simple and delicate form is the following sentence: "One should be fearful of being wrong in poetry when one thinks differently from the poets, and in religion when one thinks differently from the saints." And, let us add, in *art*, when we think differently from the artists. A real artist is to be met with but rarely. We believe Mr. Crane to be both one of the most naturally gifted and conscientious of the few born artists of the present day : and, therefore, according to Joubert, let us "be fearful of being wrong" when we think differently from him.

Perhaps the best examples of Mr. Crane's work in the Grosvenor Gallery—best, as containing most perfectly the characteristics of his genius—are to be

found in the designs for encaustic tiles (Nos. 302 and 303), representing in allegorical figures the four seasons and morn, noon, eve, and night. The evening and night, and the autumn and winter, are, we think, especially worthy of study and admiration. The attitudes of the figures and the tints, both expressed by the simplest means, are peculiarly suggestive of the aspects of nature which they are meant to represent. The large design, a "Cartoon for tapestry," called the "Goose Girl," is an example of how much dramatic power and feeling can be put into such work, without any transgression of the necessary laws of decorative art. In this, as in so many of Mr. Crane's designs, an impersonal power of nature is the chief actor. "O wind, blow Conrad's hat away, and make him follow as it flies," are the lines from Grimm's story of the "Goose Girl" which is represented in the cartoon; and the wind is doing its work so thoroughly and well, that it seems to freshen one as one looks at it. The geese, the girl's hair, the fore-shortened Conrad hastening after his hat into the distance, the windmill—all are obeying its gusts. The wealth of primroses and kingcups, the daffodil wreath round the girl's hat, the faint, pale tinting of the whole design—all recall the charm of early spring. The feeling in it is as fresh and as full of movement as the breeziest day of March. But, though we keenly enjoy this poem in decoration, and bear Joubert's advice still in our minds, we cannot help feeling there is something uncomfortable in the drawing of the girl's head, and the manner in which her face is put on to it.

Even in the decorative work, which is a pattern

designed to be repeated over and over again, Mr. Crane successfully animates his designs with characteristic expression, indicative of a distinct purpose or feeling. This, for example, is shown in the expression of the countenances of the cat and the peacock, in the design for mosaic (No. 352), and the animals and birds in the larger design, "Earth, air, fire, water." "In the Garden, Naworth Castle," and "Blicking Hall" (Nos. 93 and 164), are two direct portraits of nature, into which Mr. Crane has evidently got striking likenesses of the places portrayed. All Mr. Crane's landscape sketches from nature have this quality more strikingly than any other sketches we know. He has naturally such evident ease in drawing, that no amount of detail is a difficulty to him. He sees everything, and sees everything in its relative importance; and as the detail has not cost the labour that it costs most artists, it does not start out of its right place by any laboured sense of effort bestowed upon it.

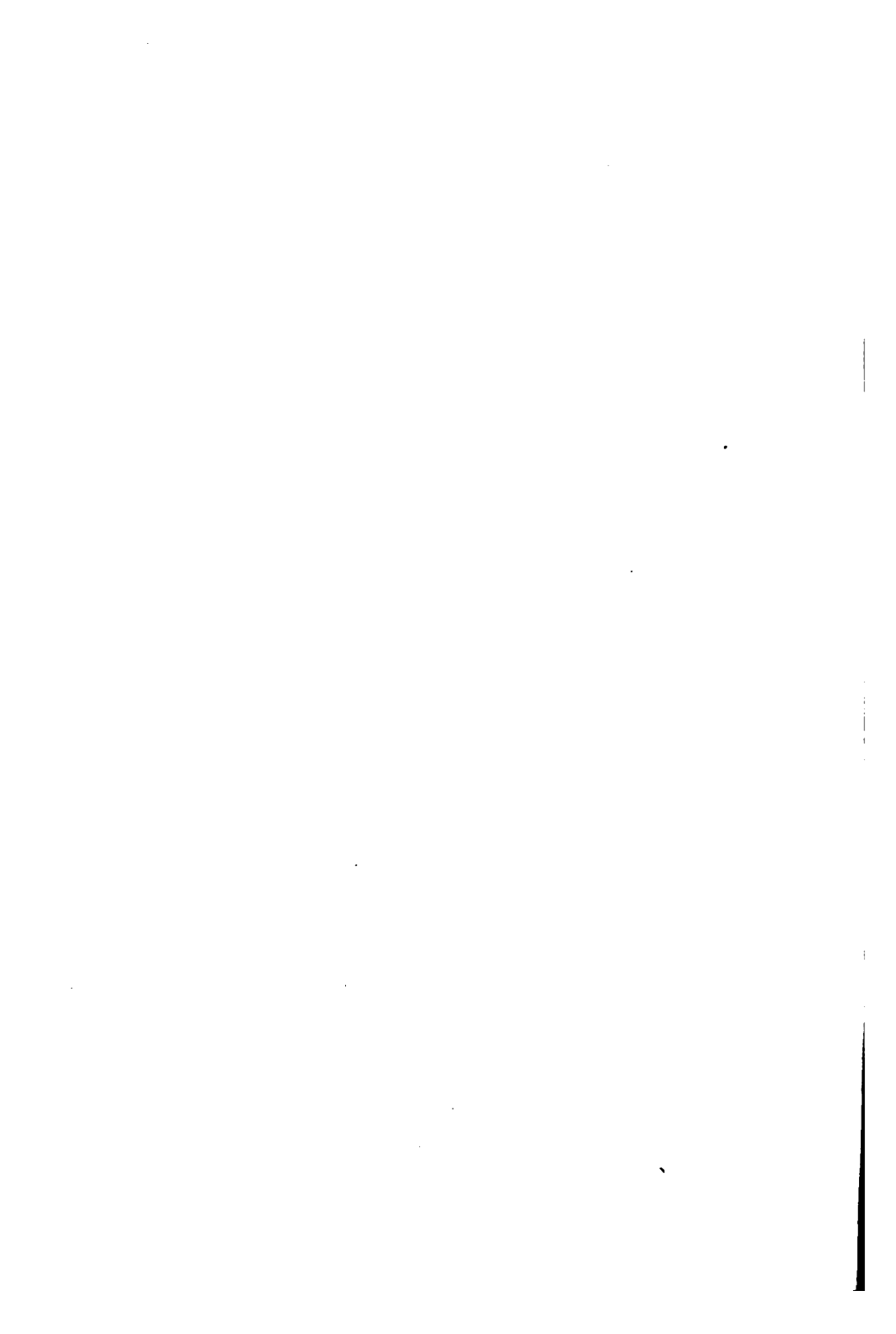
In reviewing at some length the art work of only two of the many exhibitors in the Grosvenor Gallery, we have endeavoured to treat our subject in a way which will gauge what we believe to be the relative importance between the work of Mr. Burne-Jones and Mr. Walter Crane, and that of other artists. In so doing, we do not wish to imply that there are not many excellences to be found in various other works in this collection; but that these two artists are distinctly great as masters of decorative design, and, so to speak, grow on their own stem. The qualities that are most remarkable in their designs result from natural gifts inspired by beauty in nature, not as

parasites, existing as emanations rooted in the genius of any other artist. Many artists, whose works attain a certain amount of popularity, would not have been enticed by a direct call from nature to reproduce qualities of beauty in the form in which they do, had not the beauty of such qualities been first unveiled to them by a master's work. Much art is produced every year that would not have appeared in the form it does, had it not been that Mr. Burne-Jones and Mr. Walter Crane had originally invented designs in such a form. There are artists whose passion of industry, incited by ambition, carries their talent almost so far as to touch the skirts of genius; and whose work, taken piecemeal, has at times qualities which are useful and instructive to study. Still, it would be misleading to compare such work with that which is the natural expression of a born artist.

What is meant by originality in art is too complicated a question to be discussed here; but that a continually increasing school of imitators of certain artists exists, is one of the proofs that originality inheres in the work which is imitated. Original art is inspired by emotions which Nature herself creates, and finds for itself a form which has elements of meaning that have never been expressed before. The growth of art, from the earliest known expressions of Egypt and other Eastern countries to those of the present day, is linked together like a chain, no link being entirely independent of those that went before. But, here and there, the chain is illuminated by the bright jewels of original genius; and it is these that mark its place in the serious interest of cultivated societies. Certain civilizations have been

strangely productive of such jewels. In other periods, the chain has been for long only held together by imitative talent. In such collections as the English National Gallery we have nothing but the jewels. In our yearly exhibitions we have in proportion more of the chain. In these days, when enthusiasm is constantly being stifled by the incessant carping of the critical faculty, exercised often without deliberate judgment, adequate knowledge, or natural taste, a relative distinction as to the permanent place which the work of different artists will take, whether it will form only part of the chain, or shine out brightly as a jewel, is too often lost sight of. Any writing on art should plainly show the distinction between original and imitative art: and this, we believe, can be more effectively and graciously done by dwelling on the excellences found in the original work of our truest artists, than by dwelling on the shortcomings of those who are less fortunate in their genius. After all is said and written, the work must speak for itself; and the best that writing or speaking can do for it is to induce students and those to whom art is interesting to go and see it and let it speak to them for itself.

ARTICLES FROM THE
"SPECTATOR."



IN COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.¹

YOUNG Italy, especially of late, has been breaking the hearts of all who are in love with the poetry of associations. Besides the inherent beauty in the old work which is being destroyed every year, there vanishes with such destructions the added poetry which each year, and each season of each year, has stamped on the stone or marble surface; the harmony and tone that age, Nature working upon Art, alone can give. Young Italy ruthlessly carts away the houses from the Ponte-alle-Grazie in Florence, she destroys romantic fountains in Rome, and to say nothing of the wholesale sacrilege committed by restoration and destruction in Venice, Torcello, and Murano, she climbs with youthful, brutal energy up into the quiet Cadore mountains, and ruins, for the poet or the artist, the aspect of the spot where Titian was born, rooting up, we are told, the old fountain standing on the little green plateau by the side of his birthplace, against the background of dolomite heights,—the fountain round which Titian must have played as a little child, which he must have watched from the old kitchen window, as the cattle came in herds, morning and evening, to drink from its stone lip. Young Italy saw nothing worth preserving in such an association, but unhappily was not inactive in her obtuseness. She wished to

¹ Written in September, 1879.

erect something accordant with her own taste, in a spot of world-wide interest (a spot whose chief interest lies in the thought of what it looked like four centuries ago), and the result of Young Italy's efforts is, in place of the old fountain, a modern one in the taste of the age, spotting with its crude newness the mellowed tone of the scene, and vulgarizing with a suggestion of sight-seeing a most beautiful and romantic landscape. England cannot boast of much more refinement in such matters. Each year brings about, notwithstanding the Anti-Restoration Society, some fresh destruction, which depresses with a sense of cruelty, and disheartens all hopes for better things in the future. To say nothing of graver and more important destructions, why could not the inoffensive little fountain in the Temple Gardens be left to tell its little story of a past; or the funny old vestry in Kensington, guarded by quaint figures—two pretty bits of colour in the old street—be left us, to make a link with the old palace behind? The same answer is always given—utility must not be sacrificed to unpractical fancies. As if there was no practical use in that feeling of love of early associations and reverence for the past, for the beauty that age, and age alone, can add to any monument, to any human thought worked out in art! letting alone the unsatisfactory answer which must be given to this question: If we pull down, can we build up again as well? In these days of machinery, the art we have alive in us has all retired into picture-making and statue-making. No longer in everyday buildings or street ornamentation can we find an idea spontaneous and original, framed by the artistic faculty which was second nature in former times, and

put into shape by the hand of workers also imbued by such an instinctive faculty. There is no denying the fact that we are yearly thoughtlessly destroying what, in the nature of things, we cannot recover in any form. The world has moved away from the conditions which allowed of the construction of these things, and we ought to realize the impossibility of repeating them. But there is one spot in Europe which the most melancholy of the anti-restorers should flock to and take comfort in—where not only no destruction is going on, but at present construction in honour of the past. The Cologne Cathedral is to be finished next year. The sound of the hammers and tools that began its foundation six hundred years ago is to cease, they say, in August, 1880, leaving complete this great poem in stone. Perhaps it is from a spirit of pride more than from religious devotion, that the Germans have for so many years been spending large sums of money on the finishing of this great work; certainly the feeling of the Cologne Cathedral is not repeated in any modern work in the town or country over which it soars high into the air, dwarfing all other buildings for many miles around it. Still, whatever may be the impulse, there is in the undertaking a spirit of reverence for an idea, and the acknowledgment of the greatness of the idea. The plan has not been changed. No modern German has dared to try and improve the conception which, six hundred years ago, a now nameless enthusiast—a giant architect—imagined and put down on parchment. The greatest ideas attack so many sides of human sympathy, that it is seldom but one side is found, sooner or later, to respond to the greatest efforts of genius;

and in whatever spirit it is completed, however different are the religious feelings of the workmen who began on the foundations in 1248 and those who are finishing the pinnacles in 1879, once finished, the plan worked out, it exists for all the world—a standard of imaginative grasp, courageous enthusiasm, and yearning devotion to a higher being, one of the loftiest shrines of Gothic feeling in the world. Let us be grateful to the Germans that they have not only connected the two detached pieces of building, two colossal fragments intercepted by masses of old houses—the condition the Cathedral was in when the century began—but that they have completed the plan faithfully to the original conception.

As you mount the hilly street from your hotel, and confront the huge pile and you feel the influence of its extraordinary beauty, this idea of an unknown poet whose work breathes up into spaces of blue sky and masses of white, luminous cloud, leaving the roofs of houses at its base, dwarfing the town around it,—a romantic, almost mythical, interest seems to attach one to it. How strange to hear the sound of the hammers as you pass the sheds clustered round the base, and listen to the ring of the tools echoing far away above in those labyrinths of scaffolding that still inclose the airy heights of the spires; how strange to think those hand-workers are still constructing the idea of a master who had but one human life six hundred years ago! What thousands of hands, used for how many years on the conception of one brain! Is that one brain conscious that its work is so nearly completed, that the plan it conceived has taken form and size, and that it has risen far up

into the air, and is seen from the flowing waters of the Rhine from so far away? Is this an infant effort of a brain and heart which for six hundred years since has been developing fresh powers in another world? The whole building gives the feeling of rising and lifting itself up away from the town; from its tourist life of comfortable, crowded hotels, from its commercial life of busy traffic and screeching trains and steamers, from the echo of the life of modern Paris, the ideal of the *bourgeoisie* of Europe, the materialist life of pleasure, show, and comfort—this Gothic shrine would seem to spring up away from all this. The flying buttresses alone in the design, like arms outstretched around it, holding on to pinnaced staves, seem to fix it down. The richness, the intricacy, the elaboration, these are all beautiful and admirable, but they are but details in the service of that feeling of upward yearning and longing, the pure poetry of Gothic art. As the height of the Dom rises above the dwelling-houses around it, so the elevation of that feeling of devotion must have risen above material interests in the soul of the inventor of this great poem. Where, in our modern life, is the fervour, so secure in its aim, so settled in its faith, so enthusiastic in its force? This is the genius of the old masters. We have art-genius enough, but art, not elevated by some faith enthusiastically believed in, has never and will never create works such as this, unquestionably great, which impresses, consciously or unconsciously, every human soul coming under its influence.

Leaving the sunlight on the Platz outside, and passing through the small swing-door, you find yourself in cool spaces of shadowed height. The Gothic

feeling is even more impressively, because more simply, expressed here, than in the richer, more elaborate building outside, the casement of the shrine. Inside, the sense of being drawn higher and higher is even greater. The eye unconsciously rises, as the pillars seem to be attenuated and stretch away above the sight. The roof is nowhere, the eye seldom reaches it. There is a general sense of over-shadowing, but it is far above; the sense of springing upwards has no limit. The completeness of Greek perfection, the self-contained power which produces perfect harmony, is not here, nor the ornamented art of the Renaissance; but a spirit, a soul, has built itself into pillars which soar with almost an exaggeration of height; the courage for such a successful exaggeration of proportion means a strength outside and beyond human reason. To realize in stone such a yearning upwards of the spirit means more than genius for art, though this is present in its highest constructive power; it means the genius of religious devotion, inspiration. It is the purity and directness of aim in this art which separates it, and elevates it above all more recent art of the kind; the spirit of it makes even that of Albert Dürer's magnificent windows modern, fantastic, and worldly. The saints of these are mixed up with heraldry, the Maria with kings and potentates, the materials of the robes of the devotional are patterned over with richest designs, the colours are gorgeous, they are triumphs of art; but sit down on one of the seats below them, and turn towards the vistas of pillars, and you feel how much more elevated and simpler is the feeling of the earlier work, in those cross avenues of stony stems flecked with coloured

sunlight, and pierced with the jewels of old glass, like the points of light that dazzle through thick foliage from the setting sun. This older glass, two hundred years more ancient than that of Albert Dürer, has in it no design that can be distinctly traced from below, but mysterious jets of solemn colour, through which the sun has pierced for five hundred years, are still dazzling round the loftiest pillars like crowns of jewels.

Moving across the church, towards the old entrance, you come upon the huge stone image of St. Christopher, struggling through the floods, yearning, enthusiastic, happy, guided by the smiling child, seeing the further side, the goal where the burden will be taken off and a truth unveiled. Here, again, is the purest spirit of the Gothic; also in the group of the Pieta, found under the houses which for centuries divided the tower from the chancel. The expression of the faces, roughly sculptured, in this group is gentle and dignified, the sorrow in them simple and grave, the devotion tender and pitying. The whole group, however, is smothered with large paper roses, a breath of the devotion of the nineteenth-century Catholics. Sitting in view of the St. Christopher, we see also a little doll, very old, and decked with queenly robes and numberless gold and jewelled trinkets. Seven candles are burning by her side, seven signs of faith in the Cologne Catholics that the Virgin will cure their sick children. If it is a leg that causes the illness, a little wax leg is brought and hung beneath her shrine, on which she stands in a glass case; if an arm, a wax arm; if it is a general illness, a wax image of a whole baby. If the children recover, the Virgin is rewarded by having a brooch, or a ring, or a cross hung on to her. This,

surely, can hardly be the practice of the Germans we meet at our *table d'hôte*. These look so very unsuperstitious, so much too knowing, for any such faith as this. Probably such customs are chiefly kept up by the peasant class. But is this feeling less enlightened than the materialist view of life? Both assuredly fall far short of the elevation and the enlightenment of the spirit who, living in what is called the dark ages, created this marvel of architecture, this poem of Gothic feeling, the Cologne Cathedral. We leave it with a sense that humanity seems purer, higher, worthier for having counted among its creatures such a brain and such a soul as the inventor of it.

A GOSSIP ABOUT GOETHE IN HIS BIRTHPLACE.

The hundred and thirtieth anniversary of Goethe's birthday was kept, as usual, on August 28th of this year. The inhabitants and visitors in Frankfort are still enthusiastic in their demonstrations. The girls and young men bring bouquets and crowns of flowers, with which they smother the birth-room; and those who have portraits of Goethe or of anyone connected with his life, send them to be exhibited in the shrine whereto the worshippers flock on the birthday. This shrine is a solid, substantial, and considering the times in which it was built, spacious citizen's house. It is now nearly empty of furniture, and is used for no other purpose than as a show, except one or two rooms inhabited by the showman. You enter through a turn-

stile in the hall, and pay a mark for the sight. The only part which is artistically attractive is the balustrade of the staircase up to the second landing. This is of beautifully wrought iron, made at the time Goethe's father took the house ; and the centre of each design is a monogram of his two parents' names. On the landings are several casts from busts of Goethe's more celebrated friends, and the rooms are hung with pictures and portraits. These last, and a few relics of his ladyloves, form the chief interest of the show. There were many portraits of Goethe lent for this year's birthday. Two were original oil paintings, the others engravings and photographs from pictures in different parts of the world. Young Goethe, painted in profile, small-sized, holding out at arm's length a silhouette portrait of a young lady, "*wahrscheinlich Carlotta*," as you are told by the showman of the house, is more characteristic as a specimen of the faults of German art than suggestive of the appearance of a master-poet. The sentimental enthusiasm shining out of the gaze of the neatly-dressed young man towards the prosaic little black profile would imply a joke to most minds, but the German who painted it was evidently quite in earnest, sentimentally in earnest, with this treatment of his subject. He has accentuated all the points which in theory are considered as belonging to beauty, and fulfilling the old-fashioned notion of "regular features." The nose he has lengthened and made enormous, the eye large and starting, the eyelashes very hard and long. Nothing suggestive of Goethe's mind can be gathered from it. It is but the framework of a face, showing none of the subtle workings of the mind upon the features or the lines, only a superadded sentimentalism

towards the black silhouette. The other portrait in oils is life-sized and has not even the merit of being funny. The engravings and photographs of the well-known portraits, especially the photograph of the picture in St. Petersburg, are interesting and suggestive, but all are more or less prosaic. We pass on to his parents' portraits, which are both of them characteristic of what we know of their characters. Much likeness to Goethe is to be traced in the mother's countenance. To her he owed the larger sides of his nature and mind, and the elasticity, the lovingness, and the loveliness of his temperament; to his father, he owed the "methodisch" love of order and self-government. There is a twinkle in Frau Goethe's eye, denoting an appreciation of fun; and in the whole face, fine, large modelling and a cheerful expression, happy in a sense of power, and in the possession of a nature wide in its sympathies and genial in its warmth. Herr Goethe's portrait is that of a prim person, rather anxious, with, perhaps, more desire for power than ability to obtain it. After the parents' portraits, we are shown the relics of Goethe's romances. A little silk jacket, with bunches of lavender flowers stamped on it, and pinked frills round the edge, stands for poor little Fredericka. She was too insignificant a person to have left a portrait behind her, in the days before photography. Of Carlotta, immortalized by being the heroine of "Werther," we have the engraving from a portrait, and a fanciful picture of the scene when Goethe first saw her, cutting bread and butter for the children before going to the dance. However much the sentiment of this may denote Carlotta's virtue in having performed her duty before taking her pleasure, there is a wild revelry about

the scene in this print which shows in the artist a want of the sense of order and decorum proper to such occasions which we hope the perfect Carlotta did not share. Her real portrait, however, is interesting. It is taken full-face, with the hair turned up over cushions. The eyes are sleepy and rather Japanese in shape ; the upper lip rather long but delicately cut ; and the whole face is sweet and refined in expression, but not heroic. Of "Lili" there is a portrait profile, which looks as if it might have been like. It is a pretty mignonne head, on a long, slender throat. There is a little pertness perhaps in the *nez retroussé* and the pose of the head, but it is bird-like and delicate, and, like Carlotta, refined, though not heroic. Both these and also Fredericka, from the description we hear of her, must have been "scharmante mädchen." Of the Frau von Stein, unfortunately, no real portrait was exhibited, only an engraving from a picture of the theatricals at the court of Weimar in which Goethe acted, and where Frau von Stein is represented holding out, with a gushing enthusiasm, a wreath of laurels towards him. Both are palpably conventional portraits. Schiller says, writing to his friend Körner, about the Frau von Stein : "Beautiful she can never have been, but her countenance has a soft earnestness, and a quite peculiar openness." Schiller may have taken a somewhat solemn view of the necessary requisitions for beauty, but it is evident from all the descriptions and from her portrait that the Frau von Stein possessed no beauty which, in itself was overpowering ; that she, together with Fredericka, Lili, and Carlotta, possessed a charm which fascinated Goethe independently of regularity of feature. Unfortunately, there was no picture of Christiana, nor of the

later loves, and, other visitors arriving, we were left at peace and required to look at nothing more, but to wander about the rooms and let them impress us with thoughts of Goethe.

Surrounded by the walls of the house where he was born, and where he lived before he was a great intellectual power, surrounded by these portraits of himself and those who specially cared for him and whom he thought he cared for, by the evidences of the enthusiasm he still creates in the minds of his countrymen and women, and haunted by that interesting book, "Goethe's Life," written by our own countryman, who, since the last Goethe birthday, has passed away, we feel more vividly the impression of what Goethe was as a man than what he was as an author. A German near us exclaims enthusiastically, "Wie ein Apollo!" as he looks at Goethe's portrait and we smile, we do not quite know why, but feel there is something comical in the comparison. An Apollo with a double chin, and with strong materialistic indications about the lines of the mouth!

A very German Apollo in fact was Goethe, very handsome, doubtless, but an Apollo whose sentiments were governed by his reason, and what he considered was due to his self-culture and development; whose romances were more or less play, to be begun and ended according as he willed them to begin or end, but whose lasting liaison, ending in marriage, sprang from feelings of the earth earthy; an Apollo who could so little understand the vagaries of a jealous woman, the vagaries of a temperament that was not entirely governed by reason, that when Frau von Stein would not behave herself amiably when she felt herself

replaced in his warmest affections by Christiana, he writes quite solemnly, and with no idea of insulting her, that he fears she has gone back to the bad habit of drinking too much coffee, which she had left off from love of him. Is it possible that a man should be so great a poet and have so little sense of humour, so little imagination of one kind? We feel it was possible, and only possible because Goethe was a German, and of all Germans, the most typically German. We are constantly hearing and saying that Germans are *so* sentimental. Their sentimentality is obvious, at times obtrusive, but it is nevertheless, we think, quite outside the strongest side of their nature. Perhaps it is because they are really thorough-going materialists that their ideal is to be romantic. On the same principle that we see those who lead the hardest intellectual lives turning to the simplest games for recreation, so the most reasonable, the most exact minds, will enjoy the most romantic games of sentiment as play. As we look at the relics of Goethe's games in this line, at the little silk jacket preserved under the glass case, because the heart over which it was worn beat so warmly for one who, though he excited the warmth, could leave her when, as he himself says, it almost cost her her life—when we think of this fresh, budding life that was spoilt by the "greatest intellectual power of our age," we cannot help rather despising, and certainly hating, the self-culture and pomposities which were so baneful to her interests. Particularly are we provoked when we read how comfortable Goethe felt about it after re-visiting her, and realizing how he had spoilt her life. He describes his visit and his contentment in a letter to the same lady to whom he afterwards attributes an

excess in coffee-drinking as the explanation of her annoyance at the game with her being over. He says : "On the 25th I rode towards Sesenheim, and there found the family as I had left it eight years ago. I was welcomed in the most friendly manner. The second daughter loved me in those days better than I deserved, and more than others to whom I had given so much passion and faith. I was forced to leave her, *at a moment when it nearly cost her her life* ; she passed lightly over that episode, to tell me what traces still remained of the old illness, and behaved with such exquisite delicacy and generosity from the moment that I stood before her unexpected on the threshold, that I felt quite relieved. I must do her the justice to say that she made not the slightest attempt to rekindle in my bosom the embers of love. . . . I stayed the night there, and departed at dawn, leaving behind me friendly faces ; so that I can now think once more of this corner of the world with comfort, and know they are at peace with me." "Lili" we have naturally less compassion for. Besides being a coquette, she was a smarter, more prosperous young lady. Moreover, she married, and the closing scene with Goethe was over her baby, as he describes in another letter to Frau von Stein : "In the afternoon I called on Lili, and found the lovely *grasaffen* with a baby of seven weeks old, her mother standing by. There also I was received with admiration and pleasure. I made many inquiries, and to my great delight found the good creature happily married. Her husband, from what I could learn, seems a worthy, sensible fellow, rich, well-placed in the world ; in short, she has everything she needs. Supped with Lili, and went away in the moonlight. The sweet emotions

which accompanied me I cannot describe." The story of "Lili," whom, in his autobiography, he says he loved more than any other woman—"she was the first, and I can also add she is the last, I truly loved"—shows more than any other what *he* meant by loving. The moment the obstacles preventing his marriage with Lili were removed, from that moment he dreaded it! Why? Because he was perfectly true and real, he had far too great a mind to stand being bored by pretences, and, knowing where the reality of his feelings stopped, he would not involve his life by any action which would have entailed an unwise strain upon his affections, which strain would have led to unhappiness to others, as well as to himself. He was right so far, and he was wise, but in this side of his nature he was small. Charming girls made vivid impressions on his very impressionable nature, but he always knew that his heart of hearts, the part of human nature which makes action imperative, was free. He was more in love with the feeling of being in love than with the objects that inspired the feeling. Possibly, according to his lights, he was not selfish, though his love-episodes lead so much to this conclusion. At all events, his apparent selfishness in action was not an end in itself—it was the means towards an end he conscientiously thought desirable for others, as well as for himself. He was comfort-loving for others, as well as for himself. In one period of his life we find him trying daily to spend less upon himself, that he may have more to give to others. Early in life we find him enjoying Spinoza with supreme satisfaction, and saying, "But what especially rivetted me to him, was the boundless disinterestedness which shone forth in every sentence.

That wonderful sentiment, 'He who truly loves God must not require God to love him in return,' filled my mind. To be disinterested in everything, but most of all in *love and friendship*, was my highest desire, my maxim, my practice, so that that saucy speech of Philena's, 'If I love thee, what is that to thee?' was spoken right out of my heart." We find him in later years generously grateful, disinterested, and gently tolerant in his conduct towards Christiana. These cannot have been the feelings nor the actions of a mere egotist. As an artist the picture of his life is a brilliant picture. There is a sustained power, an elasticity, an ever-spontaneous growth to the end, which made him virtually a younger man at eighty than most men are at forty, but there is a want in the picture—the want there is in the picture of the German nation. Nature seems to have said to Goethe, "I have given you so much, and such a faculty for self-development and self-government; you must now manage yourself. I cannot, in fairness to the rest of the world, help you any more."

And Nature did not give him the faculty of worshipping any man or woman, or anything outside himself with his whole strength; and without this faculty of worshipping lives must always be incomplete, must always miss the highest greatness. Goethe's mind was a grand, first-rate machine; the powers that put it into motion proceeded from the heart and brain, but very little soul went to the propelling of it. His own intellectual light was his hero, and what of clenching completeness is wanting in his actions and feelings, was caused, we think, by the want of a light recognized as above himself towards which his soul could yearn.

There were no ghosts about his life; there are no ghosts about the lives of the many Germans he has educated, and who are almost too reasonable to need a religion. And Goethe was too reasonable really to love. Mr. Lewes says: "He knew little of the exquisite *companionship* of two souls striving in emulous spirit of loving rivalry to become better, to become wiser, teaching each other to soar. He knew little of this; and the kiss he feared to press upon the loving lips of Fredericka—the life of sympathy he refused to share with her—are wanting to the greatness of his works," and we may add, to the greatness of his life.

But we cannot leave his old home with his shortcomings uppermost. Though his nature was incomplete on one side, it was never capable of anything small, ignoble, or petty. When he "loved and rode away," he was as kind and considerate, barring the riding away, as when he was delighting in the presence of those who fascinated him. This kindness, it is true, may have been enhanced by the gratitude he felt towards those who had afforded him *situations* for his poems and dramas, as an artist will feel grateful to the beauty that has given him the inspiration for his picture. Still, gratitude is always something. We must conclude by a sentence from Mr. Lewes, which has in it the characteristics of this kind of thoughtfulness, and also of the materialism of the German Apollo: "The heart of the Frau von Stein had no memory but for its wounds. She spoke with petty malice of the 'low person' who had usurped her place, rejected Goethe's friendship, affected to pity him, and circulated gossip about his beloved. They were forced to meet, but

they met no longer as before. To the last, he thought and spoke of her tenderly, and I know, on unexceptional authority, that *when there was anything appetizing brought to table, which he thought would please her, he often said 'Send some of this to the Frau von Stein.'*"

THE LESSER "BARBARIANS."¹

Mr. Matthew Arnold, in his essay "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace," says: "When I want to distinguish clearly the aristocratic class from the Philistines proper, or middle class, I name the former in my own mind *the Barbarians*. And when I go through the country, and see this and that beautiful and imposing seat of theirs crowning the landscape, 'There,' I say to myself, 'is a great fortified post of the Barbarians.'" But besides these great fortified posts of the big Barbarians mentioned by Mr. Arnold, there are also many minor fortified posts, belonging to those who, since we have read the above, we, in our minds, call the *lesser Barbarians*, equally Barbarians in their instincts, in their appearance, in their manners, equally unable to understand the comparative value of ideas *versus* prejudices, equally absorbed in what are called "manly sports,"—suitable companions, from their habits, ways of life, and views of things generally, to consort with the bigger species, yet holding little or less land, and exercising little or less influence over the lives of other classes. For one big, bouncing, fortified post of the great barbarian, there are, studded about the country,

¹ Written in 1881.

dozens of smaller, less imposing seats, belonging to or rented by those who are, in spirit, vassals to the great man—seats bearing a like reference to the great places, that the houses in Park Street, Mount Street, and Green Street do to those in Grosvenor Square or Berkeley Square ; or those in Wilton Street, Chester Street, and Chapel Street do to the Belgrave Square or Eaton Square mansions. Now, the lesser Barbarian is by no means of the same species as the country squire. He is, personally, a more refined being ; he has probably been brought up in one of the imposing seats, has passed some of his youth in a good regiment, and may even be a better sportsman than his bigger neighbour. He and his wife are quite as good-looking as the big Barbarian and his wife, and are distinguishable from these in a crowd only, if at all, by a greater precision in the correctness of their style, and by being more exclusive in recognizing only as *fellow-creatures* those who, in general Barbarian language, are understood as “ nice people.” The purest examples of the species of lesser Barbarians abound chiefly in the good hunting counties, and come to London only for the “ height of the season,” where they are distinguishable in the fashionable, respectable society as that portion which, in milliner’s language, would be called the most “ stylish.” A duchess can afford to be a dowdy, she moves surrounded by an *atmosphere* which is unmistakable, and it is her atmosphere which imposes on the populace, more than her individual presence. But the female lesser Barbarian has to mark her distinction by her dress and appearance as an individual. The real business in life of the lesser Barbarians is to perfect all their pursuits into a distinguished science of pleasure.

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This science is studied more successfully and earnestly by the lesser Barbarians than by any other of the rich idle classes. Though they are not assuredly what can be called a religious class, they are often "Churchy," and most often rather "High-Churchy;" but their real object of worship is *good style*. It is a standard of *good style* which directs the education of their children, which determines all their domestic arrangements and especially the stable department, their dress, their thoughts, their occupations, their acquaintances, their intimacies, their religion. Personally, they are often very kind to dependants and the class poor enough to be removed sufficiently below them for their fortified posts not to be endangered by any inroad on a social ground, but they are quite inaccessible on principle to any outside the magic circle of "nice people," if such outsiders dare make an approach on the ground of common fellowship. Herds of these outsiders may be seen at the county gatherings of the big Barbarians, but at the select parties of the lesser, never one. They are mostly Conservative in politics, and the reverse of intellectual in culture; but they are efficient in action, though the aim of the action may not be high. They do well what they do at all; what they attempt they achieve; but their attempts are nearly all in the line of pleasure, and in their own line the good specimens are very complete and finished. They have "go," energy, decorum, good taste from an external point of view, pleasantness in their lives, but no true beauty. As there is no spirituality, though a good deal of *Churchiness* in their religion, so there is no beauty, though plenty of "good style," in their lives.

Now, there is still a real and helpful idea in the existence of the bigger Barbarians. Their fortified posts have often a true splendour, which has its use. The best of these strongholds are like museums of the fine arts fitted into cases of beautiful architecture, and refined and finished with the beauty of a home. When the owners do their duty—and there are many whose aim it is to do it conscientiously, according to their lights—these fortified posts are acquisitions to all classes who inhabit the neighbourhood. Much of the time and mind of their owners is given up to the duties as well as the pleasures of their position, and, like the Bishops, though they have palaces to dwell in, they have little or no leisure to gloat over the luxury of their palaces. Unless absorbed in some individual passion or vice, the lives of the bigger Barbarians are not selfish in intention. The power of their position brings out whatever of generosity or kindness may be in their dispositions as individuals, and their unquestioned rank and position tend to their viewing social questions which do not endanger that position of rank from an unbiassed, large, and considerate point of view; and as any society they may choose to invite to their “fortified posts” cannot affect their own social status, provided it is within the pale of respectability—and even in the question of respectability the world allows the bigger Barbarians a laxity which is almost without limits—there is no reason why they should not gratify their kindly instincts of hospitality. The theory of the great Barbarians, however far short the practice of individuals may fall, is to give to the classes below them in position a standard of beauty and grace in the external matters of life, and of the manner in which to hold

intercourse with their fellow-creatures. What it is good for their fellow-men to share with them, that, as a rule, they are ready to share. They mostly open their houses and their parks hospitably. Of their personal intimacy they are doubtless chary, but to the classes of society living under different conditions, such personal intimacy would not be of any very special use. Though the big Barbarians may appear to be a pleasure-loving class, as a rule they work hard in their own way, and are an element in English life that tends to the happiness of society in general. Many take, of course, a selfish, ignoble view of their position, but the theory of the class in general is *noblesse oblige*. But with these vassals in spirit of the great Barbarians, these good-looking, these well-dressed, these externally refined, these exclusive, lesser Barbarians, the theory of life, though it is doubtless unconsciously so, seems to be one of consistent selfishness. It is their idea of life, which is a mistaken one. They aim at living the life of a class, without the reality of that life. It is inherited power which gives all the reality to the position of the big Barbarians, and with it come the responsibilities, the duties, the occupations of the inheritance. Whether they fulfil these or neglect them, the heads of the aristocracy have not to seek their first work in life; it comes to them with their birthright; and their high rank, when justified by well-used power, has a splendour about it which spreads a genial influence on the classes socially below them; but rank, without power or influence, beyond a certain external atmosphere of refinement, is rather a frothy concern, narrowing to those who tenaciously hold to it, and exasperating to those who are kept at arm's length by

its exclusiveness. To aim at being like a big Barbarian is as futile as crying for the moon, for the one thing a man or woman cannot make themselves is a big Barbarian. A few men and women can easily cultivate themselves into beings superior to this species, but they can never become the actual thing ; so that they who adopt the manner of living, as far as they can, of those with whom they cannot share the only valuable possession—inherited power—are almost certain to confuse their lives with false ideals and vaporous aims. It is these, whom we call lesser Barbarians, and it is these who excite the Philistines to bitterness against the "upper classes," more than the genuine Barbarian himself.

The Philistines and populace recognize, more or less consciously, that there is at the root of all worthy occupation an idea beyond making a livelihood, an idea that the work in hand does some good to the community at large, and pushes on the knowledge or civilization of the world, besides giving material support to the individual, and they resent paying respect to any class whose influence does not contain such an idea. This idea of common interest has a harmonizing influence, and tends to bind classes together ; and it is the absence of any such harmonizing influence between the Philistines and the pleasure-loving classes which leads to the exasperation of the former and the selfishness of the latter. The Philistine sees the lesser Barbarian leading a life of pleasure and refined luxury which he shares with no other class less fortunate, and not even pretending to live according to the principle of doing good in his generation. The theory of all the professions is that their followers, besides making an

income whereon to live, should adopt the unselfish aim of doing their work so that every class is the better for it,—the clergy, by making every one more religious; lawyers, by forwarding the claims of justice; soldiers, by protecting their country in peace and against foreign aggression; the politician, by legislating so that his country may be the happier and more prosperous; the literary man, by so popularizing truth and goodness that the people are imbued with both; the poet and artist, by translating Nature into a form of art which shall accentuate beauty, and ennoble and refine the impressions which all human nature, unless completely degraded, is capable of receiving; the business classes and manufacturers, by forwarding the commerce of the country and the employment of the hand-worker. But the lesser Barbarians, who expect more respect and consideration than do all these—what higher view of duty, think the Philistines and the populace, can be got out of the theory of their lives and occupations? What they hold as distinctive of their class, they are not at all willing to share for the benefit of those who might be improved by it. Their influence, such as it is, is not derived from money or intellect, but from refinement in the external proceedings of life; and this refinement they wrap round their whole manner of living, and it adds much to the pleasure of their own lives, and what is really good and sound in it would add, doubtless, to the pleasure of the lives of other classes; but the theory of the lesser Barbarians is to use such refinement for their own pleasure and their own pride exclusively. In so missing any higher idea of duty arising from the possession of their special treasure, this treasure of

external refinement becomes, by its tendency to selfishness, morally ignoble.

The root of all exclusiveness lies not only in pride, but in fear. It is a sign not only of selfishness, but of weakness and insecurity, and in the tenacity with which the lesser Barbarian holds to his exclusiveness, there may be a latent misgiving as to the strength of his position. This position he might make more respectable, if he frankly realized to himself in what the advantages of it consist. Probably, if the subject were faced honestly, and from a view of life which included moral and spiritual elements, much which is cultivated as refinement would drop off as baneful self-indulgence, a spurious and not a healthy outcome of civilization ; still, after such a clearing, there would yet remain a good side to the refinement of the lesser Barbarian, which it would be well for all classes to acknowledge and adopt. Personal refinement, extending to finish, care, and precision, and a certain deliberation and thought in relation to the details of the manner of living, gives a personal dignity which is absent in the usual rush and tear of modern life. Mr. Ruskin expatiates somewhere on the unutterable vulgarity of being in a hurry, and assuredly nothing that is worth doing is the better done for being unaccompanied by the personal dignity which results from such refinement of habit. It may be noticed that those who do great things, who work the hardest in the highest lines, are mostly very dependent on such refinement for a relaxation of strain which real mental effort always causes, especially when joined to the delicacy and sensitiveness which finely organized natures possess. Now, though the modern *good style*

and *good taste* of the lesser Barbarians are not at all synonymous with beauty or the best fitness of things, there is about them a balance and poise which are the reverse of exaggeration and extravagance. The moderation resulting from a feeling of balance and deliberation, and which is one necessary element in beauty, is a salient merit in all so-called well-bred people. It is the element which saves them from making themselves personally ridiculous, the unfortunate fate of so many Philistines. It is an element which adds essentially to the grace of life, and corresponds in external matters with the grace which culture adds to genius. Now, with true culture the Barbarians have nothing to do, for they cease to be Barbarians when they have ; their mental vision does not pierce through the prejudices of class and habit. The attitude of their minds is, so to speak, *provincial*. But in external material and matters they do excel up to a certain point, and though they could not influence any class by ideas, they might be missionaries among the Philistines in the matter of personal order and refinement, were they to apply the obvious truth of the Christian principle, that what is worth having is worth sharing. The theory of all Barbarians is to treat the refinement of what they call "nice people" as a direct gift of Nature to the "upper classes" alone, and they assume that it is as useless as it is unnecessary to endeavour to imbue the Philistines with any flavour of it. It is a gift beyond price, beyond everything, in their eyes, and they treat it with that reverence with which the more spiritual minded treat religion, only that they have no such impulse to share it ; and Barbarians will they remain as long as they do so monopolize it. But

with the lesser species this refinement is apt to become almost its own travesty, by becoming an aim in itself, and not the outcome of natural conditions. It is an effort to grace something, the reality of which does not exist; it is a striving after the flavour without the substance. It results in something like the effect of an artificial scent, compared to the whiff you get from the flowers themselves. Pleasure is laboured at till it ceases to be a graceful and pretty addition to the work of the world, and becomes the dreariest of all occupations, by being pursued as an aim in itself.

Barbarians, great and small, are not having "so good a time of it" as they used to have, and probably a still worse time is in prospect for them. The bigger species, having still much to give in the way of pleasure, will still be tolerated, as long as their great possessions cling to them; but the lesser species must change their habits of mind, or expect to lose all influence. The inevitable fate of all those classes who contract their sympathies, and are selfish on principle, is to be left out of the movement of the true life of the world, and to be gradually more and more ignored as objects of interest. The instinct of justice in nations will always return sooner or later to the principles found in the great speech Sarpedon made to Glaucus, written thousands of years ago, "Why boast we, Glaucus, our extended reign. . . . unless great acts superior merit prove?" "Great acts," on the part of the governing classes, and those who wish to be respected as holding a superior position in society, would entail, under the present conditions of modern life, a rising above class prejudices, an extension of sympathy to all who are honestly working in all

occupations. The prettier mode of living in external and material matters, which is understood so well by the Barbarians, if extended into the region of mind and feeling, would cause a gentleness and nobility of thought and consideration for others, and so quickly emancipate the Barbarians into "children of light"—and "children of light" of the pleasantest description, for there is an inherited charm of atmosphere about them which, if only they could rise out of their own special class vulgarisms, would add to their "light" a mellowness and beauty much needed in the organization of life. The practical result in society of this emancipation of the Barbarians would be that the *good style* and *good taste* which they now so tenaciously appropriate to themselves alone, they would try and diffuse among other classes. These are, when good of their kind, very pleasant elements in the intercourse of the world. But only, if at all, by personal contact and personal sympathy can the trick be learnt. This is well recognized nowadays between the poor and the rich, in the giving of material help, but it is still utterly ignored when it is a matter of infusing other classes with the blessings of refinement. The Philistines recognize, as a rule, well enough that there is a difference between their own more slovenly way of living, however costly it may be, and the finish and pleasantness of the habits of the Barbarians; but as the latter keep them socially at arm's-length, the Philistines have not the opportunity of acquiring the advantages possessed by the so-called "upper classes."

To cultivate the Philistines personally would involve a great deal of distasteful work, particularly for the women of the emancipated Barbarians, because differ-

ence in matters of taste produces almost a greater jar in personal intercourse than difference in matters of feeling ; and the taste of the Philistines is their weak side. Doubtless, the *ci-devant* Barbarian woman would find it a bore to talk on a level of real sympathy and equality to a Philistine woman who "puts on" her manners, is wanting in simplicity, meanders round a subject with obvious little affectations in the course of conversation, and who is proud of the wrong things, and brags about possessions she does not know how to use. Still, both are women, and the more true womanly feelings they have, the easier will it be for them to find a common ground. The Barbarians must expand, and the Philistines must restrain themselves, if members of each class wish to emancipate themselves into "children of light ;" but the lesser Barbarians, as a power in society, will probably not exist much longer. The Philistines are more likely to win, for though their taste may be faulty, though they may be too eager and exaggerated in their attitudes of mind and body, they have within them more power of growth, they have not the same brutal confidence in themselves, and, therefore, have more susceptibility to ideas, a susceptibility which Barbarians have not. As Mr. Matthew Arnold says : " It is because aristocracies almost inevitably fail to appreciate justly, or even to take into their mind, the instinct pushing the masses towards expansion and fuller life, that they lose their hold over them. It is the old story of the incapacity of aristocracies for ideas—the secret of their want of success in modern epochs ;" and we may add, that the influence of the pleasure-loving lesser Barbarians will

lessen more and more, as advanced ideas enforce more and more a certain amount of mental and moral culture. But before they become quite extinguished as a power, we would fain see them leave an inheritance behind them among the Philistines of greater good taste in the material things of life, and of reticence, dignity, and pleasantness of manner in social intercourse; for, to conclude with the remainder of the above quotation, "The people treats them (the aristocracies) with flagrant injustice, when it denies all obligation to them. They can and often do impart a high spirit, a fine ideal of grandeur, to the people; thus they lay the foundation of a great nation."

MRS. WATTS HUGHES'S "VOICE-FIGURES."¹

Mrs. Watts Hughes's Home for Little Boys, at Islington, is known to many. Mr. Augustine Birrell's lecture on Gibbon, in aid of its funds, delivered in February last at Westminster, and again last summer at Islington, was heard by many. The Home is one for the most homeless of little street urchins, the children chiefly of criminals; a home to eat and to sleep in, to play and to sing in, during all the hours of the twenty-four when they are not learning their lessons at the School Board school. At once on entering it, you feel that the judgment guiding the arrangements belongs to one or more friends of these little boys, who put real heart into the business of making them happy and good; the kind of personal interest which can be traced in the management of all

¹ Written in 1889.

institutions of the kind which can be called, in the widest and truest sense, successful. But beyond this there is a touch of fairyland about this Islington Home which is quite unique. Instead of blinds or curtains drawn across the lower panes of the windows, there are wonderful designs in colour; strange, beautiful things—suggesting objects in nature, but which are certainly neither exact repetitions nor imitations of anything in nature. They are more like, perhaps, what a dream might make out of the impressions left by nature—perfectly drawn designs of shell-like forms, photographically precise renderings of shapes of which the exact originals were never seen by human eye on sea or land; such things as “Alice in Wonderland” might have come upon, had she tumbled down to the bottom of the sea. There are trumpet and snake-like forms twisted and involved in complicated curves, impelled on to the glass seemingly by the force of a power like that which impels and sculpts the boiling wreaths of steam out of the funnel of a gasping engine. Pictured on the glass, they are rendered into the most elaborate and perfectly drawn perspective, each curve coloured and toned with gradations as subtle as any shell or petal of flower could be. Each foreshortened form of shell, trumpet, and snake is barred across by an infinity of lines, sometimes merely surrounding the forms by straight lines, at other times rippled in wavy lines ending at the edge by the daintiest of goffered frills. Across these lines will have been impelled on some of the glasses, other lines taking a contrary direction, the two sets in crossing each other forming a perfect honeycomb pattern. Most strange and suggestive, indeed, are

those window-panes which the little boys at the Islington Home have to look through. They see weird caverns at the bottom of the sea full of beautifully coloured fancy sea anemones and mussel shells, headless snakes and fairy cups, and mossy entanglements of bud and leaf-like form ; all seemingly vital, with the same laws of growth as those which inspired the creation of the designs in nature which they suggest. The special force of nature which produced them is Mrs. Watts Hughes's voice. These are some varieties of her "voice-figures." There are other classes which resemble more distinctly flowers.

I, with other friends, have been fortunate enough to see all the different classes of figures produced more than once, and will try and describe shortly what we saw when those classes of figures were produced, of which there are specimens now being exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition. First, for the daisy-like figure, of which there are examples in a case at the New Gallery, Mrs. Hughes prepares a paste of flake-white powder-colour and water, and into a metal tube turned up at the end she inserts a ring resembling a table napkin ring, over one end of which is stretched a thin membrane of india-rubber. The tube being inverted at the end, while singing through it, she looks straight down on the india-rubber disc. She covers this disc with a little water, and then taking up some of the flake-white paste with a penknife, she adds it to the water, which floats it all over the disc. She then sings into the tube a low note of her voice—a note not very loud, but firm and wilful. The effect on the paste is immediate. Tiny globules are thrown up into the air above the

disc, and sputtering and leaping, all alive with the motion caused by the vibrations of her voice, crowd into the centre of the membrane, making a little round heap like the centre of a daisy. Mrs. Hughes then alters the character of the note she is singing, though not its pitch. Instead of the note of firm, peremptory character, she sings a very sustained and insidious sound. Then, from the round centre of white paste will fly out, at unequal distances, little tentative star-like jets. Sometimes two or three such furtive attempts at a start will have been made, when suddenly a perfect and symmetrical row of petals will start out and create with the centre a lovely little, exquisitely finished, daisy-like form. Sometimes even three rows of petals will be the answer to the song-note, whereas at other times the one row will be imperfect, and will require singing in again to the centre before a perfect regular row produces itself. The pansy form is produced somewhat in the same way as the daisy, but more water is put on the disc in proportion to the paste, and the note is altered and sung differently, only as Mrs. Watts Hughes knows how to alter and sing it. It must be remembered that it is no ordinary voice or singing which creates these figures. Those who have had the happiness to hear Mrs. Hughes sing parts of Glück's "Orphée," or Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater," and last, not least, her own national Welsh air, "The Ash-Grove," must realize that there are very few even among the greatest singers who can rival her in the science of using the vocal organ in all its infinite delicacies, intricacies, and distinctions, and who can express pathetic and dramatic emotion with as much power and beauty.

For the singing of the shell and trumpet-like figures, Mrs. Hughes also prepares a paste with powder-colour and water; but instead of the flake-white, she uses Prussian blue, madder-lake, or any other colour which she has found, by its weight and character, will respond to the vibrations of her voice, and will work easily on the glass and membrane. She rubs the membrane over with this paste, and likewise the piece of glass on which she is going to sing the figure. For a small piece of glass she will use an inverted tube, as in the production of the floral forms, and will move the glass rapidly round on the disc of india-rubber, while she sings a firm, sustained, but short note. It is the work of a second, and we see on the glass one of the strange nameless forms. Should the glass be too large to hold in the hand, then Mrs. Hughes uses a straight tube, and sings a note while moving it round or along the glass.

What it all means, no one, least of all Mrs. Watts Hughes, pretends to be able to explain. These voice-figures are facts which it is to be hoped science may be able, sooner or later, to explain. Every year more and more curious developments of these facts are created, and all whom they interest must wish Mrs. Watts Hughes may be able to continue working at them. Any day she may sing some fresh wonder which may facilitate the work of science, and lead to a fuller understanding of them. Meanwhile, we must go on wondering why these vibrations of the voice should lead to the formation of designs so nearly the copy of flowers and ferns and trees and shells.

But no explanation is needed to make us enjoy the

beauty of these voice-figures. Artists to whom they have been shown are enthusiastic in their admiration of them. They are particularly artistically interesting in one way. The old saying attributed to Titian, "Colour is quality," is by them amply exemplified. Most of these voice-figures have been sung in the most ordinary colours; but the exquisite perfection and finish of the designs, and the subtle toning, shading, and gradation which the singing gives to this ordinary powder and water, produces a quality and beauty of colour which might be a lesson to any painter. If "colour is quality," what then is quality? Is it not the suggestion of life and growth? Why have some works of art that sense of life, and others, on the contrary, the sense of death—of finality—an absence of any power of suggestion to the mind to go on working beyond what is actually before the eye? In the actual manipulation of the colour, is it not the touch that suggests *mouvement* that gives quality to the work of a real artist's painting? The touch not tightly restrained within hard and defined outline, but thrown loosely on to the canvas with a grace of unasserted security as to being in the right place, though suggesting a power of motion—a thing of life, and not of death—so, in the voice-figures, this "quality," which gives us such beautiful colour, is it not the result of the suggestion of the force of motion which the figures give us? And more than this: do they not suggest that many more things in the world about us may have been created by sound? If one woman's voice can sing such strange and beautiful designs, what may not other sounds have created? What may they not be now creating around us?

SANTA FINA OF SAN GIMIGNIANO DELLE
BELLE TORRI.¹

Cradled among the stern towers and fortresses of San Gimignano, the "San Gimignano delle Belle Torri" of former days, in the heart of the solitary Tuscan mountain-ranges near Siena, is still to be found the shrine of the little damsel Saint, Santa Fina, who lived her short fifteen years more than six hundred years ago, but who still presides as the good genius of these heights. Grim and forsaken look the many towers rising round her shrine; dead and forgotten are the ambitions, the pride, and the emulous passions of the great families who raised them, when each noble family vied with the other, and tried by the greater height of its tower to assert and make visible its supremacy over its neighbour, till at last a law had to be passed limiting the height to which any private individual might build a tower—all this is dead and of the past. But in the *Collegiate*, otherwise the Cathedral, still burns the lamp upon the altar in Santa Fina's chapel; and still on its walls, by the hand of the great Ghirlandaio, that sober, restrained, not to say matter-of-fact painter of spiritual matters, fresh and well-preserved as if painted but yesterday, are the records of the two miracles which are said to have happened in connection with her death. But her short life of fifteen years had been lived, her virtues and her sufferings had been recognized before any miracle concerning her was recorded. The Church canonized her for her virtues, and the miracles were added thereto

¹ Written in May, 1893.

in order to accentuate these virtues to the popular mind. The miracles are the subjects of the frescoes, the pictorial ornament of her short life's history ; but little Santa Fina is still alive among the ruined mediæval fortresses and towers by reason of what must ever live and be of value to the world as long as there is suffering and want, and long as we have all to realize that none of us can stand alone or be independent of our fellow-creatures when we are stricken with care, sorrow, or sickness. Santa Fina was of noble birth, though poor. She was afflicted with a disease of the spine, and was opposed by her mother in carrying out her good deeds. One of the frescoes in a church in San Gimignano represents this lady being tripped up by a rather grotesque, undignified-looking devil, and thrown downstairs on account of this opposition. Santa Fina died at the age of fifteen ; nevertheless, six hundred years after her death, the story is still told of her helpfulness and charity to the poor and needy, and of the beautiful examples she gave of resignation and courage. "Her chapel exists," as Mrs. Jameson says, "as the glorification of feminine patience, fortitude, and charity;" and a pilgrimage to it is, in every way, one of the most interesting that can be made, either from Florence or from Siena.

What Rothenburg is in Bavaria, San Gimignano is in Tuscany ; both typical, unspoilt, mediæval, strongly fortified towns, too much out of the line of the ordinary nineteenth-century world traffic to have been yet converted by modern civilization to its special wants ; both, however, containing treasures for the artist, and every year becoming better known to those who deplore most the disfigurements which modern

life entails on the beautiful work of the past. A railway now goes to Rothenburg, and the many thousand pilgrims who visit the "Bavarian Mecca," as Bayreuth has been called, find it little out of their way to stop there. There is no railway to San Gimignano; but the fact that, though it is far and rather difficult of access for one day's excursion, the Queen of England made an expedition to it from Florence this year, will probably be a sufficient incitement to lead many to make a similar effort. The Queen went by special train from Florence to Poggi Bonsi, the nearest station to San Gimignano on the line to Siena, and drove the six miles up to the town. But a more interesting way of reaching it is to drive by road the whole way from Siena. This is a drive of twenty-three miles through a country which, though a contrast to the gay and sunny Italy the traveller leaves as he diverges southwards from the junction at Empoli, is most impressive and interesting. It is not exactly a sad-looking country, but it is for the most part grave and serious. Coming straight from Florence—radiant, joyous Florence, lying like a beautiful shell in the lap of her Val d'Arno, her marbles gleaming opal-like, pink and golden, through the sunshine, her bowers and her loggias in this spring-time festooned with countless garlands of the maize-coloured banksia rose, and the pale amethyst clusters of drooping, sweet-scented glicene, her happy slopes and busy plain inclosed high up in the sky-distance by brilliant snow-lit Apennines and shining Carrara peaks—coming with all this fresh in the eye, the country you drive through between Siena and San Gimignano is of strikingly grave and serious aspect, almost solemn in its sense of solitude, its depth of

colour, its grandeur of outline. All the most fiery siennas, all the fullest red and purple madders of the artist's colour-box could not exaggerate the fervent, warm tones of the soil, blue-gray rocks peeping out here and there, and clusters of the pale sad-green bells of the hellebore increasing by contrast the full richness of its colour. The country seems very scantily populated; you drive many miles and see but very few domiciles of any kind; and very few peasants are to be met with on the road. Labour is cheap in Tuscany. One woman was to be seen whose work that day was apparently to take charge of three sheep; and further on, a man's sole duty seemed to be to preside over the well-being of two pigs. Whether the pig was cold or the man was hot was undetermined; but one of the pigs was carrying the man's coat about the road like a saddle, the arms hanging down on each side as stirrups. Now and then on the hill-side is massed a group of ilex trees and stone pines, the white corner of a villa peeping out from among them, supported by a deep-shadowed archway below. Further on, a solemn avenue of cypresses creeps up the edge of the hill, each tree rising black, like a finger of death pointing upwards, and leading to the wall of a convent or monastery perched on the summit of the hill. Pine trees cover some of the higher ranges, and the road at times passes through woods of deciduous trees. Strange to say, these are as bare of leaf at the end of April as our English trees would be in January, though further on you come upon hedges fragrant with flowering honeysuckle and weighed down with white hawthorn-blossom, and corn risen two feet from the ground—contemporaries in England of full

foliage on our forest trees. After eight or ten miles' journeying, the foreground of the views you see as you drive along dons a gayer, more cultivated aspect. The rugged sternness of its wild ranges falls back and retires into the middle distance, allowing a brighter, more prosperous-looking foreground to border the road. The nearer slopes become lightened by the greeny-gray foliage of the olive trees which drapes round their dark, twisted branches and stems like a silvery gauze, hanging misty, like clouds, above the verdant vividness of the bright young corn, splashed here and there by the scarlet flame of a poppy. A field of sainfoin, another of Russian clover, pink and carmine, and patches of the bright-blue salvia, fill the road-side with bright colour. Further on, a light azure veil, lying in a fold of the hill, attracts our eye and puzzles us. It is bluer than any shadow, yet it is so light, it seems to float on the earth like a bit of the bluest sky come down from above to soften the strong, rough vigour of the earth. Presently it is explained by the appearance of a field of flax by the side of the road—a sheet of delicate fairy-like blue blossoms, a fitting emblem of the sweet saint-girl whose spirit still reigns as the presiding angel among the rugged fortresses and mediæval towers of stern San Gimignano. These said towers are to be seen long before they are reached, high up against the sky, looking mysterious and remote like a giant's dwelling in a fairy tale. Then they are lost again, and you drive on and up round the hills, the ascent getting steeper and steeper till you find you are creeping up the side of the fortified hill itself, under the walls and piles of high towers, till you mount to gates of the town, 1,260 feet

above the sea, and pass through a deep archway into the streets. These are narrow, and paved with large flat stones, the houses on either side full of incidents of interesting architecture. There is much to be seen. The famous towers, now only thirteen in number, seen as you stand close under their squared walls, rise with impressive strength up into the sky, the tallest being the Torre del Commune, 175 feet, and the most noticeable the twin towers, Torri degli Ardinghelli, built in the thirteenth century by the Ardinghelli family. The walls inside the churches are covered with frescoes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the Church of St. Augustin is a series covering the high walls of the choir, by Benozzo Gozzoli, a series only second in interest and beauty to those of the Ricardi Palace in Florence. They depict the life and doings of St. Augustin; and the commission to paint them was given to Benozzo Gozzoli by one Maestro Parigina Domenico Strambi, who had travelled to Paris, and was incited by what he had seen to beautify his native town by this art. In the same church is a most beautiful example of the work of Benedetto da Majano in an altar and tomb. He it was who also sculptured the shrine in which rest the bones of Santa Fina and the beautiful altar in her chapel. These face you as you enter it from the aisle of the *Collegiate*. It is needless to add that the work of this shrine and altar is lovely and refined, showing the peculiar qualities of restrained beauty which belonged to the best period of Italian sculpture, for when did the work by the hand of Majano show other than all this? The two walls at right angles to the altar are painted in *fresco* by the great Domenico Ghirlandaio, Michael Angelo's

master, and are, if not quite the finest, certainly among the finest, of his works. Here, indeed, is realistic art of the right kind—so like nature that even the miracles it depicts look quite natural; nevertheless pervaded by an atmosphere of beauty, of serenity by a dignity, a distinction, which makes such art a truly fitting language in which to describe what happened to so rare a maiden. One of these designs represents Santa Fina lying on a low bed in her simple room, a nurse sitting on either side of her pillow, her hands together as in devotion, her eyes raised to the vision of St. Gregory surrounded by winged cherub-heads, who is announcing to her her approaching death. This vision has passed into the little chamber by an open door, through which, and likewise through the window near her head, comes a breath of sweet country air and landscape. In the lunette above this scene, two beautiful figures of flying angels hold up on clouds a half-length profile portrait of Santa Fina released from her cross, standing upright with folded hands, as if in presence of her Lord. The design painted in fresco on the opposite wall is even more beautiful. It represents the moment when Santa Fina, after death, is lying before the altar, the bishop at her head reading the burial service, a young acolyte at her feet holding up a crucifix, a crowd of men and acolytes surrounding them; and when, as the old nurse, who tended her through her sufferings, knelt down beside her, she opened her eyes, raised her head, and took one of her nurse's hands between her own. In Ghirlandaio's picture, a sobbing child is pressing one of her little feet, stiff with death, to his lips. Exquisitely beautiful and full of nature and expression are the faces and

attitudes of the figures of those around, the girl-saint herself portrayed with pathetic simplicity and sense of reality. No realistic painting of to-day ever looked more real, however commonplace and flippant the subject. And yet, what is it that divides such art in all that touches the highest sensibilities, by an immeasurable distance from the modern school of realism? Were people better in those days? Or are we less able to explain in art our better side? Why does goodness such as Santa Fina's no longer appeal to our artists as the highest beauty? Goodness there is in abundance, but where is the art that interprets it? We turn from these great works of Ghirlandaio with the conviction that he succeeded in creating a rare and holy impression by his work, because he placed his genius in a devout spirit on the shrine of the saintly goodness of this child. Every touch seems to emanate from devotional feeling. Modern art prostrates itself before its own cleverness, and we have to relearn that intellect is but a halfway house in the steep ascent humanity has to make in order to reach the height its nature is capable of reaching. The genius of goodness is, after all, the force in human nature which has had the greatest power in influencing humanity; that faithfulness to the highest instincts given to poor mortals, which, in the spirit of the most distinguished and the finest grained human beings, ever growing, ever radiating, becomes a passion of loving unselfishness which blossoms out for the good of all the world; and this passion it was that inspired Ghirlandaio's genius, when he painted so beautifully these records of Santa Fina.

Turning out of the church enriched by such treasures

and taking a pathway behind it, a *podere* of olive trees and corn is reached, whence you are led through a doorway into a garden. Your path is edged by a thick border of blade-like iris leaves and tall spikes of their purple and lilac blossoms. You pass a well, alarming-looking from its depth and size, hung over by vines and apple-blossom, and mount a narrow staircase in the fortress wall which incloses the garden, to the top of a guard-tower, whence you are shown the show view of San Gimignano. And wonderful it certainly is—mountain-ranges grand and grave encircle it in one vast amphitheatre, gleams of sunshine flit across the valleys between ; but the lines rising against the horizon are all shadowed in solemn russet and purple. Even San Gimignano, its fortified walls and its massive towers, look small beside the great hills heaving around them and stretching away to the skyline. Still, as we look round us—miles and miles into the distance—it is the little girl-saint who dominates the scene in the imagination. Modern scepticism may suggest that perhaps she is altogether a myth, an invention, and that, at all events, it is certain that the scenes from her life and death painted by the great Ghirlandaio must, as far as portraiture goes, be unauthentic, seeing that they were painted two hundred years after her death ;—run it to ground in whatever direction modern cynicism or dogmatic agnosticism suggests, the beauty of the strong impression Santa Fina can produce will ever remain the best result of the long excursion to San Gimignano delle Belle Torri.

THE "KYRLE SOCIETY."

THE "KYRLE SOCIETY."

THE first public meeting of the "Kyrle Society" took place at Kensington on Thursday, January 27th, 1881. The speakers were Prince Leopold, who is the president of the society, and who took the chair, Mr. William Morris, Sir Frederic Leighton, Dr. Andrew Clark, Mr. G. A. Sala, Mr. Kegan Paul, Dr. Allchin, the Rev. Teignmouth Shore, and Mr. R. Hunter. The object of the society is to bring "beauty home to the poor," and it proposes to itself the following means of carrying out this object: "To decorate by mural paintings, pictures, gifts of flowers, and other means, workmen's clubs, schools, and mission rooms. To lay out as gardens any available strips of waste ground, and to encourage the cultivation of plants, not only in windows, but also in areas and back yards. To organize a voluntary choir of singers to give oratorios and concerts to the poor." To co-operate as far as possible with the National Health Society in securing open-air spaces in poor neighbourhoods, also in investigating the question as to the possibility of preventing smoke-fog.

This first public meeting of the "Kyrle Society" is, in its way, the sign that a new line of thought on certain subjects has taken a very definite form, and is developing into action. There has been a growing

feeling for some years past that much of the doctrine of the so-called "Utilitarians" is mere charlatanism, based on the greed of the money-making classes, and not on any sound principle of progress, or true political economy, a progress and political economy which would mean a full development of all the best faculties of human nature. Many years ago Mr. Ruskin endeavoured to prove to us how short-sighted was that view which encouraged the selfishness of the capitalist at the expense of the full development, as a human being, of the handworker. Many years ago Mr. W. Morris and a few friends started a business in which the workman was encouraged to develop his higher faculties—the sense of beauty and the power of invention. For years Mr. Matthew Arnold has questioned in his writings our wisdom as a nation in congratulating ourselves on our prosperity, whilst whole classes of our poor are leading such ugly, squalid lives. The truth which Mr. Ruskin, Mr. W. Morris, and others have taught with such earnestness and power, though still struggling through many difficulties, is steadily gaining ground, and is shaming out of the field those views which are based solely on the motives of self-interest. Not that we need ever expect all individuals of the richer classes to cease to be selfish, and careless, and forgetful as to the condition of other classes, but to get the majority of the thinking world to acknowledge that certain modes of carrying on the business of life increase such feelings is something. If such faults, common to human nature, are supported by theories which the world adopts as *sound*, such faults become a thousand times more mischievous. The meeting of the Kyrle Society is the

first public protest, made by members of various creeds and professions, that for the health of body and mind it is necessary to introduce the element of beauty into the lives of the poor. It is worthy of remark that it was not Prince Leopold, nor the poet, nor the artist, nor the clergyman, nor the writer—though all these made excellent suggestions and remarks in their speeches for the society—it was the physician who called attention to the root of the idea. It was Dr. Andrew Clark, one of the best authorities in all England on the question of the intimate relation which exists between mental and physical health, the doctor who, of all others, perhaps, has combated most successfully ~~with~~ the special nineteenth century diseases, the diseases arising from overworked nerves and brain, who took as his text, with reference to the necessity for some beauty in life, "Man does not live by bread alone." He spoke eloquently of the evils which arose from stunting the free growth of any human faculty, and advocated forcibly the truth that what the society is trying to do is not a question of gratifying "the lust of the eye," and giving it something pretty to look at ; it is giving to human beings food necessary for them as complete human beings ; it is helping to raise them from brutes into men. After such testimony few will dare to say that the aims of the society are not practical.

Utilitarianism is still, doubtless, a very big lion, and a very ugly lion in the path of the cultivation of the beautiful, and one which it is most difficult to slay, for the material interests of so many are supposed to be involved in the existence of its principles. But to those who have a strong faith in beauty—who feel, when many things seem saddened by uncertainty, that

beauty rests and refreshes, feeding and bracing the better qualities by re-inspiring hope and reviving faith ; to these the theory that anything must be necessarily ugly because it is wanted for use seems little short of a blasphemy against the completeness of the intended scheme of Nature. The construction of what is really needed for human wants cannot necessarily be inconsistent with the finer instincts with which human beings are endowed, or with the laws on which they and all their natural surroundings have been made. Those who really care for beauty do not believe it to be so small or limited an influence that it will fit only into certain human conditions, but they believe that it will fit into and grace every condition, and add to the real utility of every human industry in life. The phraseology of Utilitarians, those who would shunt the element of beauty out of the line of practical considerations, abound in vague reasoning, such as "business is business," etc., and take refuge behind an imaginary "happiness to the many," which sounds like a very grim satire to those who inspect closely the lives of these "many" in the favourite nests of the Utilitarians.

The idea at the root of the Kyrle Society is not a scheme of philanthropy, the adoption or rejection of which is a matter of mere choice or taste ; nor is it to be urged only on the grounds of the elementary Christian principle, that whatever is worth having is worth sharing. This bringing "beauty home to the poor" is, on the common grounds of human fellowship, a just debt which we, who are able to enjoy the blessings of civilization, owe to those who aid us by their hand-labour in the acquirement of such enjoyment,

but who themselves receive as their portion only the curses of civilization. Any one of us looking round the room we are sitting in, more or less comfortable, more or less pleasant to the eye, cannot fail to trace in every spot of it the sign of that labour which has been undergone under conditions nearly always depressing, and often unhealthy. Do not let us comfort ourselves with the idea that having paid for our possessions we have encouraged honest industry, and that the debt is paid. What money cannot buy, money cannot pay for alone. Sending thousands of pounds down to the poor in the squalid parts of London would not alone pay the debt. The pauperized class would not know how to cure the malady it is suffering from, for it does not recognize what it is. Ugliness, squalor, filth, have depressed these poor too long. Depression has made them hopeless, and in many cases—and who can wonder?—hopelessness has made them vicious. A sense has to be re-awakened, a hope re-inspired, a sense and a hope without which no human being is complete, but without which the most mischievous side of human nature becomes developed; and this we must by some means or other do before we have a right to feel we have justly paid our debt. For the curses of civilization arise greatly from the selfishness and carelessness of those who profit most from its luxuries. The classes, with whom life is not a struggle for material wants, can move away from the dirt and squalor of those parts of cities where the hard, ugly side of the work of the world is done, and surround themselves with pure air and beautiful things; but the farther the rich move away from the centres of industry into purer air and lovelier surroundings, the

greater becomes the filth, the denser becomes the over-crowded air and space with human life of the quarters they leave behind them. The house that held one family is made to hold half-a-dozen ; the cleanliness and order which the presence of even a few well-to-do people kept up in a neighbourhood disappears now that it is so easy for men to live away from their business, and the poor are left to an unalleviated portion of ugliness and squalor. It is not meant that those who escape from such conditions are particularly selfish and careless, but the landlords and employers, and the land whose laws allow these conditions because any alteration would be expensive or troublesome, are to blame, and also surely all those who are rich who know of such conditions and do nothing to remedy them. The pestilence of ugliness does not even confine itself to cities, but spreads into the country scenery till whole parts of what used to be "green England" is now called the "black country."

The more practical knowledge we acquire on the subject of the relation between the well-to-do classes and the poor, the more distinctly shall we perceive that it is not poverty, dirt, untidiness alone which brings about the worst kind of want of self-respect and the lowest depravity in human nature. It is a latent sense of injury in the minds of the poor, a feeling that so many people living within a few miles of them are living in comfort and luxury, and are utterly careless whether their daily hard struggle for the bare necessities of life is successful or not. It is the feeling that nobody cares for them, and that they care for nobody, which has made so many of the poor grasping and greedy, the clever among them using

their brains for cunning and imposture, rather than for a wholesome inventiveness in their labour. The intellectual vein of modern thought has also done much to take from the poor the beauty and restraint of religion. A scepticism which to many minds is a saddening influence, forcing them all the more strongly back on to those moral certainties which can guide the outward conduct of life—such a scepticism is to the poor often an excuse to do what he likes, rather than what he ought to do. No wonder the clergy of all creeds feel hardened against those who, without fully realizing the responsibility of powerful intellects, disturb the foundation of all religious hold on the people, and do not hesitate to publish their negations to those who interpret them but as an excuse for licence.

The entire separation of the daily life between the rich and the poor has had far deeper consequences than depriving the poor merely of pleasantness in external surroundings. Help given without pity, received without gratitude—it is this doubtful charity which pauperizes. By sending money through institutions from a distance we deprive the poor of the pleasure of expressing gratitude and feeling personal kindness towards the donor, while we deprive ourselves of the feelings of helpful fellowship with the poor. We do not give those who receive our gifts any chance of feeling pleasure in making any kind of return. The transaction from beginning to end is robbed of all vestige of beauty, and it is so robbed quite as much by the sins of the rich as by the sins of the poor. Better far would it have been for the poor to have been isolated entirely, and left to struggle with their own difficulties in their own way, than to

have had the neighbouring influence of a richer class who showed no real sympathy for their wants, but often a worse than doubtful example in the conduct of life, and pauperized them by theoretic charity into an utter want of self-respect. The worse side of our civilization has undoubtedly done a harm to our poor, and it is for the better side to try and cure this harm.

Our civilization has given to our city poor, and, in fact, all the poor who are engaged in what may be considered essentially modern mechanical industries, a poverty in gracious beautiful feelings, a poverty which has truly ground them down as human beings. The leading spirits of the Kyrle Society have for some years past been trying, through personal contact and sympathy, to re-inspire a feeling of common fellowship in the nature of the London poor towards the richer classes, not only by working among them, but by constant entertainments in the winter and expeditions into the country in the summer. After the power of human sympathy, the obvious outcome of Christianity, which is the greatest force that can be used in the intercourse between different classes to stir a growth in the better feelings of both rich and poor towards one another, the influence of the beauties of Nature is, perhaps, the healthiest external power. So far as the object of the Kyrle Society is to lift up the smoky fog from the dwellings of the poor, and in so doing let in pure daylight and clear spaces of sky above the crowded mass of human life in London, or so far as it is the object of the society to keep clear some breathing spaces for those who work all day in stifling atmospheres, spaces which serve also as playgrounds for the children, some oasis of green grass

and coloured flowers and shady trees in the desert of brick and mortar, so far will many understand the objects of the society, and sympathize with them. It is when the beauty of art also is demanded for the poor that many will demur; for do not many demur as to the practical use of it for all classes? If, however, it is granted that the rich are justified in spending money and time in surrounding themselves with beautiful objects of art, surely no thoughtful mind will grant that they are justified in thinking such beauty necessary only for their own class. Along with certain harmful ideas—such as that a gentleman need not work, that to work is only the duty of those to whom it is necessary to make money in order to live (as if any first-rate work was ever done alone for money), that idleness was the privilege of a class—ideas which, happily, are fast disappearing from the best-toned society, is the idea that beauty is a luxury only to be indulged in by the rich. In their essence beauty and luxury are opposed. Luxury treads on the skirts of vice, and we all think, or pretend to think, that vice is ugly. Luxury develops selfishness, love of ease at the expense of industry, love of sensuous pleasures at the expense of those pleasures belonging to the healthy, moral, and mental side of our natures. Luxury encourages torpor. Beauty encourages, above all things, growth. We may try to describe the process of how beauty stirs the better nature to growth, but we cannot reason it out, any more than we can prove why fog and darkness are gloomy and depressing to the spirits, or why sunlight and pure colour are exhilarating and cheering. If, for instance, it is the beauty of some natural phenomena—a sunrise, a sun-

set, the bursting of foliage in spring, that we are watching: first, perhaps, it is a feeling of curiosity that attracts our attention; then the element of wonder plays a part; it is unconsciously a wonder to our minds that the laws of Nature are again being obeyed, the laws we know so well, but the laws we can trace but such a little way. Then comes the admiration at Nature's generosity, the perfection of her finish, her intricacies, her variety, the complete success of the performance; and this admiration awakens a sense of delight, an echo in the better feelings of our nature, stirring a hope and a longing for more, which incites a sense of growth; our faculties seem keener, our nerves braced, our hearts lighter, when the influence of beauty has played upon them.

In Florence there is a quarter of the town that is called the Borgo Allegri, the "happy parish," because there it was that the people first enjoyed the delight of seeing Cimabue's picture of the "Virgin and Child." What caused such genuine pleasure in the Florentines? Probably first there was curiosity at seeing something new and remarkable; then wonder how line and colour could be made to look like a Virgin and Child and angels, wonder that the brain of any man could imagine the form of their blessed Virgin and Child, or the hand of any man be so clever as to put them there flat on a panel; then came, doubtless, the delight at the detail, bright colour, and what to them represented beauty of form; then, with Italian susceptibility and warmth they loved the picture because it did honour to their dear Virgin, and they loved their dear Virgin the more because they saw her in the picture, and so carried it about in

triumph, feeling pride that one of their own townspeople should have done such a wonderful thing, and threw up their hats and shouted, and the quarter where the picture was born was called the Borgo Allegri. In that art, to those Florentines, there was the element that inspired the sense of growth. In our modern English life the beauty of Nature undoubtedly has a strong inspiring power in the more cultivated classes; but it is doubtful whether the art that is being produced every year in such abundance has in itself, as a rule, the power of inspiring a sense of growth. Sir Frederic Leighton gave a most wise warning to the society in his speech. He reminded the meeting that it was *beauty* the society proposed to "bring home to the poor, and he owned he had felt a shudder go through him when he had heard that all who painted were expected to contribute. If it was beauty that was to be brought home to the poor, the society must be careful not to flood them with rubbish." And here we face a real difficulty. Beauty, like *Truth* in the fable, has wandered away into desert places. Our modern conditions of life have left nothing but external ugliness to the poor of cities. These have been influenced too little by the beauty of Nature in their lives for them to make any genuine response to its translation in art when it is presented to them. Perhaps nothing short of really great art would succeed in impressing the poorer classes with a genuine interest, for in truly great art the same influence is found with which Nature's beautiful creations stimulate the imagination to healthy growth. To direct the right growth of imagination so that it develops healthily, for mind and body, is a point,

strange to say, almost entirely omitted from all schemes of modern education. This accounts, perhaps, for the fact that many of the most gifted natures are in this, their own generation, misunderstood, and therefore helpless in the fight against the difficulties of our times. Often do we see fine and richly endowed natures wasting all or much of life by expending their genius in erratic fights which are practically useful to no one. Finding no sympathy for the truest, the strongest part of their natures, that which is born in them from their imagination, they separate their interests from those of their fellow-men, and allow a bitter antagonism to rise up against what is commonplace and ordinary in the world. Nevertheless, though it is little recognized, imagination plays an important part in the lives of all classes. It is there, more or less alive, in the nature of all human beings, whether directed so as to elevate animal nature in man to a sympathy with all that is beautiful, noble, and self-forgetting, or left unrealized and undirected, to help to debase the natural animal into a creature self-destructive by its own evil imaginings and mischievous to its fellow creatures. In all true art there is a power healthily to develop the imagination; and the best art, though often, like the most powerful and original written poetry, prophetic in its character, belongs essentially to its own time, and translates not only the external aspects of Nature, but reflects a sympathy with the deepest human interests which are vibrating in the heart of the age in which such art is created. Above all must the artist of the present not strain after the qualities which belonged only to conditions which no longer exist. Sir Frederic Leighton has truly said

such art had the "mummy" element in it—the keeping in a form which suggests life something which is dead, which has no power of growth in it. Let us reverently embalm all traces of the art which has been truly alive in its own time, for such art becomes a part, and one of the most interesting parts, of history ; but let us work, following the great masters in spirit and not in letter only ; let us be real and true and alive in our own generation. But here presents itself the real difficulty of modern art. To be truly alive in the sense of grasping the deepest meanings of our times, and translating such meanings into art, is a much more difficult matter than when the conditions of life were simpler ; and yet assuredly art will take no hold on the real life of the world if it is not allied to the distinctive growth and virtues of the present, if it does not reflect the mental condition of the present age.

In art, as in all other things, we must be true unto ourselves such as we are, not to a self bred in our fancy, a self we should like to be, a self bred by an envy of those simpler conditions which we truly realize as in many ways more beautiful than our own. We may have a more difficult part to play worthily than the part those Greeks and Italian artists had to play when sincerity in art feeling was aided by outward conditions ; but it is the only worthy part left us to play. It is not only that the mental atmosphere is complicated with present intellectual efforts, but that in all lines we have inheritances from the past, which, in a more or less degree, weight us with thoughts and feelings the earlier civilizations were not weighted with. Though

Christianity directs no longer the choice of subjects in modern art, our world has not been Christian all these years without Christianity weaving something of its feeling into the very fibre of the minds of our artists, something which Egypt and Greece had not. Again, the strong, unrestrained torrent of the passionate claim for the right of individuals to feel and think with individual liberty has left our particular part of the world with legacies of thoughts and feelings that Italy, which produced such a splendid school of art, was quite innocent of. Michael Angelo and Tintoretto had, doubtless, visions of a wider area of thought, wherein they stretched the wings of their imagination; but these visions were prophetic in their character, and their impulses towards expansion were not saddened as ours have been by the fact that such impulses have taken form in action, and still we are left yearning, and not at rest. To be really alive means so much more than it did when the world was younger. To secure living beauty in our art and in our lives requires more power of faith, more power of balance; it is so difficult to prevent the strong tides of specialism from crowding around us, engulfing us, and blinding us to the beacon light which is there nevertheless, always above us in the pure beauty of unselfishness and love.

As far as the poor require decorative art there is no difficulty. Mr. W. Morris's work has in it all the qualities which inspire growth, and as he is one of their best friends, the Kyrle Society is sure, under his direction, to do well. In the paper written by Mr. Watts (also a member of the Kyrle Society), and read at the Social Science meeting, was a suggestion

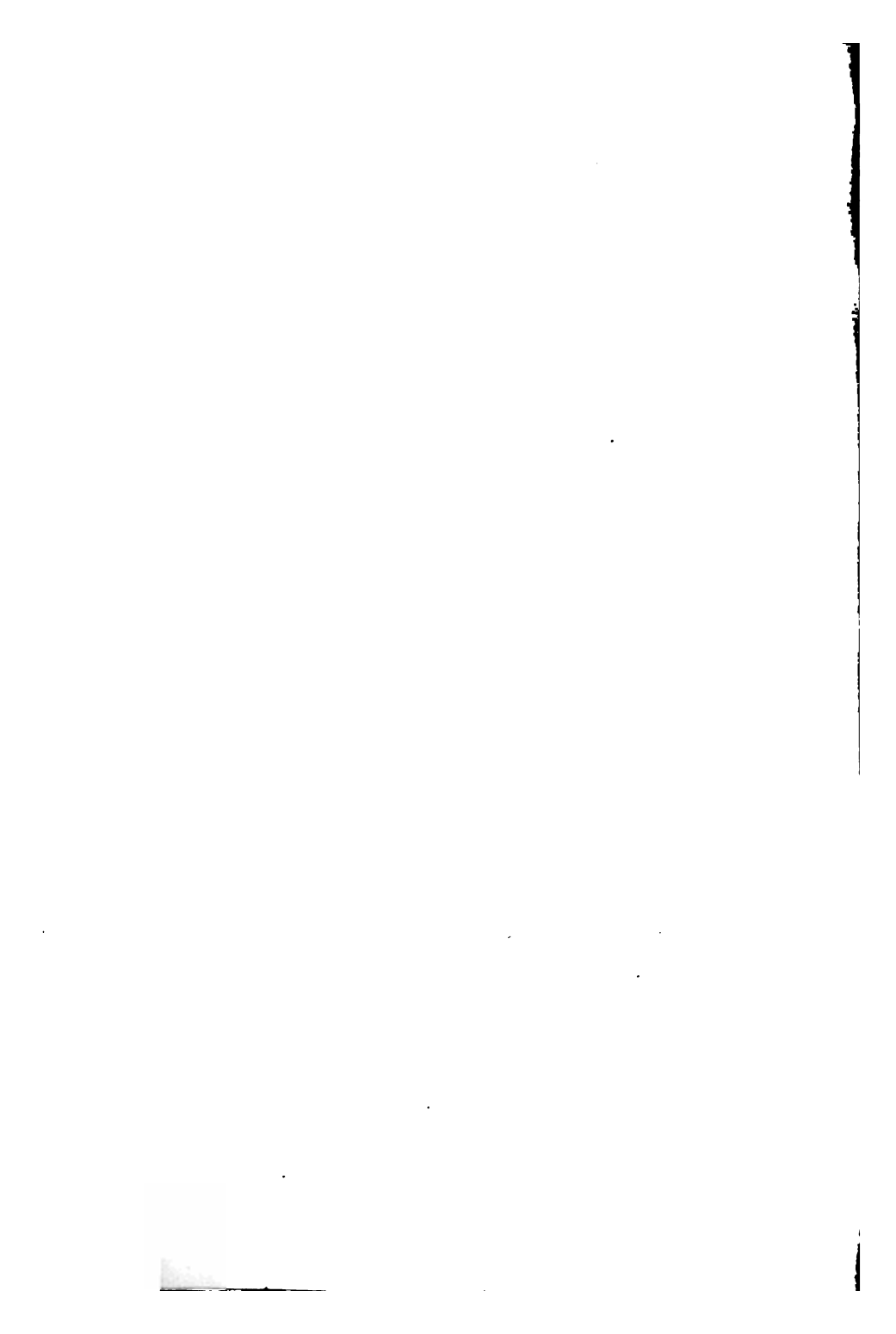
which might lead to a vivid interest in the pictorial representation of ideas and scenes. He suggested that any native talent in a parish should be encouraged to decorate the walls of their own public rooms, by first copying and enlarging prints from our best illustrated newspapers, the subjects chosen being those which would appeal most to that latent enthusiasm for heroic deeds which few Englishmen are entirely without—such subjects as the launching of a lifeboat, the saving of a crew, the brave scenes which occur at nearly every fire. If the heroes of such scenes were neighbours it might arouse the keenest interest, not only for the painting, but for the heroic deed and the hero who did it, in the minds of the poor who visited the room. Technical perfection in the performance must not, of course, be thought of; but these decorations need not necessarily be permanent. If better native talent developed itself it would be easy to cover the old with the new. But, not to forget Sir F. Leighton's warning, perhaps it might be well that no art should be *imported* to the poor from outsiders that would not contain distinct *beauty*, and form a standard in its own line of decided excellence.

We might all contribute in one way to this scheme of bringing beauty home to the poor, in a way which would not make Sir F. Leighton, or anyone else, shudder when he thought of the consequences. The poor are very like children, and with them, as with children, example is better than precept. If we follow the true principles of beauty in our own lives, the poor will certainly, sooner or later, catch something of the spirit. There is a great rage now for every kind

of artistic ornament and decoration, and there seems to be no reason why people should not buy pretty things, though it might be well sometimes for those who make a labour of such a pursuit to remember, that merely following a fashion neither implies nor gives a fine taste. But what is really important is, that we should inspire our homes with our own individual atmosphere, and that that atmosphere should be one of beauty. If women cannot create the highest standards of beauty in art it is their more special work to give standards of beauty in living. Women, as a rule, have much more power than they know how to use. Let them, instead of using their quick instincts and fine perceptions in battling in the smaller field of the world's fight called *society*, use their feminine tact, which is perhaps the most practical form imagination takes, in bringing an atmosphere of beauty into their homes, and such an effort would soon spread an influence to the poorer classes, whose finer human instincts are now stifled under the difficulties of obtaining material necessities. If we were all to try and make our lives as beautiful as we could on high principles, on the grounds that it is clearly not the intention of Him who made our natural surroundings so beautiful and so perfect that human life should be out of all harmony with such beauty and perfection, we should find many of the puzzles in life would unravel themselves, and many difficulties would be simplified. If we were to try in every feeling to crush out all small personal vanity, that ugly worm which eats the beauty out of so many of the roses of life, we should find it easier to bring a sunniness into the mental atmosphere of those whom

we influence, a sunniness genial and generous, bracing to the will, resting to the nerves, and refreshing to the mind, which would inspire as all true beauty must, a growth towards what is best and most elevating.

Let us realize once for all that there is in human nature a craving for happiness, which, if not moderately satisfied in healthy directions, has a strong tendency to satisfy itself immoderately in unhealthy excitements. Our modern civilization having sapped away many of the innocent sources of pleasure from the lives of our poor, it surely becomes a distinct duty to refund to those poor, as far as we can, some portion of those pleasures which civilization has procured for the richer classes at the expense of the workers. Certain it is, that if the rich detach the idea of beauty from general human interests, and concentrate it into their own habits of life alone, careless of its absence in the lives of others, such a conception of beauty, by ignoring her purest and worthiest ingredient, will but encourage selfish luxury, which, as we have said above, is in its very essence opposed to true beauty.



THE RED CROSS HALL.



THE RED CROSS HALL.

SOME of us are fortunate enough to be able to look back on certain days of our lives which we can recall as perfectly happy days. A certain Sunday in December, 1890, was such a red-letter day for me. It was the day on which a scheme I had set my heart on had started in a visible form ; the day when the first record of the Heroic Deeds of the Poor was uncovered at the Red Cross Hall, Southwark.

This Hall and the adjoining garden, and the well-built pretty cottages have, through Miss Octavia Hill's splendid work and energy, been secured as places of recreation and instruction for the five hundred families living in the great blocks of buildings opposite, and for all the inhabitants of the poor miserable courts in the immediate neighbourhood, who, before the garden was made, had not a blade of grass or a growing tree or shrub within reach to remind them of the face of Nature, and what she was like before human beings had smothered her surface in Southwark with their own necessities. With the help of Lady Ducie, Lady Jane Dundas, the late Mr. Henry Cowper, the Kyrle Society, and others, Miss Octavia Hill has metamorphosed a desolate space, filled with the *débris* of a paper manufactory that had been burnt

to the ground, into a garden well planted with shrubs and flowers, where there are winding paths, a pond spanned over by a bridge, a fountain, a band-stand, a covered playground for the children in wet weather to play in, roofed by a terrace where the more sedate visitors may sit and view the garden and what goes on in it, and listen to the band when it plays. From this garden, still on the site of the old burnt-down paper manufactory, you enter a spacious, well-built hall where entertainments and lectures take place every week; where the cadet corps, enrolled by Lord Wolseley in 1888, is drilled, and where gymnastic classes are given. Out of this hall again you pass into a men's club and reading-room. Along the side of the garden, bordering on White Cross Street, stand the pretty home-like cottages where the caretaker and others reside. This oasis of pleasant places was opened to the public by the Archbishop of Canterbury in June, 1888.

It was to the Hall we were directing our steps that Sunday afternoon in December, 1890. On emerging from the underground railway station at the Mansion House we found the streets looking empty and spacious, as they do in the city on Sundays. The sky, too, that afternoon, seemed wide open: large, clear spaces of blue reaching far away into a limitless vault, while rolling masses of luminous cloud floated freely in it. The river, as we crossed Southwark Bridge, looked fresh and crisp, the breeze catching its surface and fretting it into dancing wave-lets shining blue and white as sky and cloud passed over them. The City did not look such an ugly place after all! Everything seemed to be in tone

with the happy feeling which the object of our expedition gave us.

The Red Cross Hall is open every Sunday afternoon, and many inhabitants of Southwark collect there to spend a quiet hour or two. Newspapers and magazines lie on the table to be read and to be looked at, while good music is played and sung, and listened to and enjoyed by those that way inclined. On this particular Sunday the first of Mr. Walter Crane's beautiful designs illustrating deeds of heroism was uncovered and there was a larger gathering than usual to see it. Alice Ayres saving the lives of three children in a fire at the cost of her own life is the subject of this design. More than half of those who were present in the Hall that Sunday afternoon had witnessed the real fire and the real heroism of Alice Ayres, when the little oil-shop was burnt to the ground in April, 1885. I talked to many who had watched the fire and who told me of incidents and details concerning it, which were new to me. All spoke of Alice Ayres as *the* central point of interest in the event. Mr. Walter Crane, to whom we owe the beautiful design recording her heroism, and Miss Octavia Hill, to whom the people of Southwark chiefly owe the Hall, were present. Music began and we all settled down to listen. Something very beautiful was played. I think it was by Haydn, and while listening, we looked up at the beautiful design which so nobly illustrates the brave girl's sacrifice: a worthy record of a splendid deed; and we all, I am sure, felt a very satisfying contentment as we realized the fact that the courage and heroism of Alice Ayres will ever find such a record and acknowledgment on

the walls of the Red Cross Hall for so long as those walls shall stand—

“And thou in this shalt find thy monument.”

On leaving the Hall I went round by Gravel Lane to find the exact spot which was the scene of the fire. Nothing had been touched or changed since the night in April, 1885, when the oil-shop had been burned to the ground. A hoarding had been placed round the heap of ruins, otherwise it was left as the flames had left it. Coming straight from the crowded, bright lighted hall, resounding with music and gay with flowers, and standing before it in the dark solitary stillness of that Sunday evening, the lonely squalid little ruin seemed to have something strangely pathetic about it—left, as it were, out in the cold like a neglected grave; and yet the atmosphere about it still vibrating with memories which had been so vividly recalled that afternoon. The streets were very dark, but overhead the sky was clear and full of stars—those faithful but silent watchers over the ever-changing scenes on the busy earth below! I tried to picture on the spot itself the exciting scene of the fire, recalled that day to the minds of many of the neighbours on seeing, for the first time, the record of the courage of its heroine in Mr. Walter Crane's beautiful picture. The story spoke to me again as vividly as when I first read the account of it in the newspaper two mornings after the fire took place, nearly five years before. All one's enthusiasm was kindled afresh, and added to it came a glowing sense of gratitude and satisfaction, in that there was this lasting record erected close by to do honour to the glorious courage and self-sacrifice of

Alice Ayres, and to remind all who saw this record that such sacrifice and such courage are worthy of the best praise and the most lasting tribute we can offer them ; that it is the evidence of such qualities in the individuals of a nation which commands for it the respect and admiration of all nations for all time, whether shown by the heroic patience of a Gordon at Khartoum or by the action of a poor girl in Gravel Lane.

The really happiest moments in life come to us, I think, when the craving for the ideal which most of us more or less possess, is for those moments satisfied ; when, for instance, we feel that heroic aspirations are no longer things merely of the heart and imagination, but have passed from theories and hopes into splendid action, and have become real and true facts. Then we seem indeed to awake to the full meaning of beauty in its highest sense, and we feel that thrill of enthusiasm and happiness which gives all life a more hopeful hue by our becoming conscious that human nature can, though alas, but rarely, be worthy of the image in which it was created.

In "The Times" of September, 1887, Mr. G. F. Watts wrote the following letter :

" SIR,

" Among other ways of commemorating this fiftieth year of Her Majesty's reign, it would surely be of national interest to collect a complete record of the stories of heroism in everyday life. The character of a nation as a people of great deeds is one, it appears to me, that should never be lost sight of. It must surely be a matter of regret when names worthy to be remembered and stories stimulating and instructive

are allowed to be forgotten. The roll would be a long one, but I would cite as an example the name of Alice Ayres, the maid-of-all-work¹ at an oilmonger's in Gravel Lane, in April, 1885, who lost her life in saving those of her master's children. The facts, in case your readers have forgotten them, were, shortly, these: Roused by the cries of 'Fire' and the heat of the fiercely advancing flames, the girl is seen at the window of an upper story, and the crowd, holding up some clothes to break her fall, entreat her to jump down at once for her life. Instead, she goes back and reappears dragging a feather-bed after her, which with great difficulty she pushes through the window. The bed caught, and stretched the girl is again at the window, a child of three in her arms, which with great care and skill she throws safely upon the mattress. Twice again, with still older children, she repeats the heroic feat. When her turn comes to jump, suffocated, or too exhausted by her efforts, she cannot save herself. She jumps, but too feebly, falls upon the pavement, and is carried insensible to St. Thomas's Hospital, where she dies. It is not too much to say that the history of Her Majesty's reign would gain a lustre were the nation to erect a monument, say, here in London, to record the names of these likely-to-be-forgotten heroes. I cannot but believe a general response would be made to such a suggestion, and intelligent consideration and artistic power might combine to make London richer by a work that is beautiful, and our nation richer by a record that is infinitely honourable. The material prosperity of a nation is

¹ This was a mistake: Alice Ayres was the sister-in-law of the man whose children she saved, not the servant.

not an abiding possession : the deeds of its people
are.

Yours faithfully,

"G. F. WATTS.

"LITTLE HOLLAND HOUSE,

"KENSINGTON, W."

Later on in the same year Miss Octavia Hill, Lady Wentworth, Mr. Walter Crane, and the present writer decided they would propose to the Kyrle Society a scheme for decorating the Red Cross Hall with designs by Mr. Walter Crane, depicting scenes of heroism hitherto unrecorded. Mr. Walter Crane made a series of beautiful designs illustrating deeds of heroism, interspersed by paintings of allegorical figures and by designs purely decorative. Though fully sympathizing with the scheme, the Kyrle Society did not find itself in a position to give us any practical help, so it was resolved to carry it out without the aid of the Society. Through a letter in "The Times" of March 30th, 1888, our scheme was made known to the public, who responded to it with much practical sympathy.

Owing to Mr. Crane's absence in America only one more of his beautiful designs has been added to the one commemorating Alice Ayres' heroism. Again, on a Sunday afternoon in last December, we gathered in the Red Cross Hall to see another representation of an heroic deed exhibited for the first time to the visitors of the Hall. The following is the description of the incident by Miss Frances Martin from "Macmillan's Magazine." It records :

"In the summer of 1874 a number of navvies were at work upon the line of railway between Glasgow and Paisley. They stood back upon the approach of

an express train which upon passing them would cross a lofty viaduct. The engine was in sight. One of the men, named Jamieson, saw that a sleeper had started and that unless it was replaced the train would be wrecked—wrecked upon the viaduct. There was no time for words—the navvy made a sign to his nephew, also named Jamieson, and the two rushed forward. They fixed the sleeper, saved the train, and were left dead upon the line. The funeral was largely attended, especially by fellow-workmen, who had turned out to do honour to their comrades. ‘We laid them,’ writes the Rev. James Brown, of St. James’s Manse, Paisley, ‘in the same grave, in an old churchyard on a hill-side that slopes down to the very edge of the railway. As the two biers were carried down the hill, the bearers being the friends and comrades of the dead, the trains were coming and going. No fitter resting-place could have been found. I thought of Tennyson’s lines on the Duke of Wellington’s funeral in the crypt of St. Paul’s :

“Let the feet of those he wrought for,
Let the tread of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.”

‘I hope some day to get a simple stone set up that will be seen by passing travellers.’”

Though nearly twenty years had passed since this deed of duty and self-sacrifice had taken place—though the Red Cross Hall in Southwark is many many miles from the grave of the heroes, and from the scene of their heroism—we felt in looking up at Mr. Crane’s design, so splendid in dramatic feeling and action, that time and space seemed to be bridged

over, and that we were greeting the heroism of these heroes as if they were there present before us saving the lives of the train full of travellers at the risk of their own. We hope the simple stone is set up on the grave—but in Mr. Crane's beautiful design exists more even than an incitement to go and do likewise; it witnesses that human nature, even in these cynical, materialistic days, can throb with enthusiasm as it realizes the beauty of heroism and can make some effort to immortalize it in art. More designs remain to be added to the two which already decorate the Red Cross Hall, each recording an act as heroic and self-sacrificing as those of Alice Ayres and the navvies near Paisley. It is indeed hoped that the same practical sympathy which enabled these to be completed will be continued till the whole decoration of the Red Cross Hall shall be complete. Well might we call Miss Octavia Hill the good Squiress of the great village. Those interested in the decoration of the hall intended for entertainments, lectures, etc., feel that no place is more worthy or more appropriate in which to commemorate the heroic deeds of the poor than this hall, which has been a specially cared-for nursling of hers; nor could a second Mr. Walter Crane be found whose art would be worthier than his to record them.

Such records as these do not only secure for thousands of our poor neighbours at Southwark, art, not first-rate of its kind, not only educational and inspiring in its motives, but art which will be a lasting testimony to the heroism of English men and English women, who, in forgetfulness of self-interest, have displayed very typical English virtues—courage, fortitude, and

an unquestioning sense of duty. Such a testimony, we might hope, may convince many of the poor men and women who will look at these pictures and read the stories below, and between the two, spell out, and become alive to the meaning and teaching in them, that those who brought that art to them, though leading different lives from theirs, and knowing, perhaps, little of the hardships and struggles for subsistence they have daily to endure, are not, however, entirely oblivious of the lessons which they are, or ought to be, taught by the lives of those who patiently endure such hardships, but who are very heroes in their readiness to sacrifice life to help and save those who are in danger and need.

The idea of memorializing the heroic deeds of the poor carries us much further into the hearts of the poor than could any scheme for merely beautifying, however artistically, any of their dwellings or public rooms. It expresses, not so much the desire to give something to the poor, and share with them the delights of art and culture, as the acknowledging, by commemorating the heroism of their deeds, that we have got something from the poor which we can appreciate, and which we delight to honour.

All of us, rich and poor, know that our truest friends are those who take us at our best. The best friends the poor have are those who take them at their best in the wisest way. Surely these are also their most just friends. If we really believe, as we pretend to believe, that the paramount influence in the ruling of this world is a good influence and not an evil one, then surely it follows of necessity that good is in the nature of all things and all people if we seek for it. No one

has ever worked successfully among the poor, or really come into true touch with them, who has not had a hearty respect and admiration for the beauty of those qualities which poverty more especially develops, who has not realized that what is really highest in human nature is found alike in the poor and the rich. To reach this common ground, and to realize when it is reached that condescension on the one hand, and servility on the other, must of necessity cease, is the sound state of things which alone can admit of mutual respect and true sympathy between the well-to-do classes and the poor. We know, as individuals, that the overcoming of envious and jealous feelings, the abstaining from the assertion of personal rights—the development, in fact, of large, generous feelings—must always tend to better and beautify the relations of one individual with another. It is the same in this class question between rich and poor. When the classes who have leisure and wealth seek out what is noble in the lives of the poor; when they show, not only a fair, but a generous appreciation; still better, when they show an enthusiasm for virtues displayed by those who are accustomed to be considered as belonging to a lower class of society, such appreciation and sympathy awakens a heartier and a healthier gratitude than could be inspired by any amount of gifts.

An heroic action should be “a thing of beauty and a joy for ever” to all, be the hero of it rich or poor, but it is only the well-to-do classes who have the leisure or the means to commemorate the records of heroism. Who is there in the overworked East End—or indeed West End population—who can in any

form keep alive the record of the heroism of an Alice Ayres, however much they may admire it when they hear of it? A paragraph goes the round of the papers for the day, and may or may not excite comment. The travellers on the Underground, going and returning from their work, may observe to one another that "a woman seems to have behaved very well in that fire, and it cost her her life, poor thing," and the story is forgotten. The romantic, picturesque element which clung about the daring of a Grace Darling is wanting in the surroundings of the grimy London heroes and heroines, or of the Paisley navvies. But is it not precisely because there is no dressing-up in a picturesque garb, nor any special glamour or beauty in the scene to inspire an artistic emotion, that the act becomes peculiarly pathetic and ennobling as an example? Fulfilling duty at the risk of life in that simple, unquestioning way, as an inevitable consequence of having it to do, is perhaps the greatest quality in all acts of heroism. It is, of course, what ennobles the everyday life of all the best men and women in the world; but when it culminates in an action which lends itself to dramatic expression, then surely it is the time for art to claim a share in commemorating its worth, and to show that it can use such a record as a lever to try and raise the standard of good and excite admiration in many a nature which might otherwise remain unconscious and indifferent.

We cannot all be heroes or heroines. We have not all the chance given us to know if we could or could not be: and probably had we the chance, though the spirit might be willing, we should find that the flesh

might be too weak ; but all of us ought to recognize that acts of heroism are admirable ; and, if our natures are not quite submerged in materialism, and are still, even in this sceptical and cynical and comfort-loving nineteenth century, capable of feeling enthusiasm—we ought to recognize with such enthusiasm the value and beauty of such acts.

THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL
LIFE.



THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

IN reading again Mr. Balfour's powerful address to the Church Congress on the religion of humanity, reprinted now in a pamphlet form, surely the arguments which conclusively sum up against the creed of the Positivists must lead all who agree with them a step further—to ask what shortcomings there have been in the teaching of the so-called supernatural religion—what perversion there has been in the education of the present generation which has led honest-minded, sincere, and earnest-thinking natures to hold a creed so purposely mournful, so unreasonably unsatisfying. To describe it in Mr. Balfour's own words—"It so dwarfs and impoverishes the ideal end of human effort, that though it may encourage us to die with dignity, it hardly permits us to live with hope." Doubtless there is in this something of the attitude of a forlorn hope, which gives to this "religion of humanity" almost a touch of heroism; but we cannot, even from an intellectual point of view, see any necessity for such a mournful ultimatum. Is there not rather an enforced restriction, a want of intellectual completeness in conception in this "religion of humanity," curious to find in a creed held by many who are intellectually so highly educated? The writer must at once disclaim the right to view this subject

from a theologian's point, having neither the knowledge nor the capacity to do so ; but the belief that faith in some kind of religion is of practical necessity in our everyday life if we are to live our best, and that that religion must be a logical one to the whole nature of man or it must fail in its practical use, such a belief can clearly exist independently of any profound knowledge of Church history or doctrines. It must follow, we think, as the natural consequence of the experience of everyday life and of its difficulties. Mr. Balfour has exhaustively analyzed what he takes to be the shortcomings of the Positivists' creed, and has, as he puts it, "proved that it is inferior as a moralizing agent to Christianity even within the limits of mundane experience." Here our object is to think out a few of the causes in modern life which have developed such a creed and led many distinguished minds to hold such a partial view of the necessities of human nature. We want, moreover, to consider, entirely from a layman's point of view, the necessity, if only for the welfare of our intellectual health, of acknowledging the existence of a spiritual side in every human emotion and thought ; that spiritual side which haunts our inner, better selves, and when healthily exercised purifies our motives, our feelings, our aspirations—which we believe to be no superadded emotion outside our everyday wants, but an element in every healthy human feeling, but which, nevertheless, the Positivists' creed discourages us from weaving as an influence into our practical lives, and which, in many natures, orthodoxy deadens into stagnation by enveloping it in forms and over-directing it by theological law.

This spiritual instinct is, we believe, integrate, and the natural development of that essentially and, as far as we know, exclusively human quality, the self-conscious element in man. The more intimately we are conscious of self, that whole self which comprises intellect and soul, the more clearly are we aware that this self has in it an unfinished and unsatisfied element, the yearnings and aspirations of which can only be satisfied by a mysterious union in spirit with something outside itself. The one reality which is most clear to the writer's mind is the fact that the element of mystery in nature is intended by the power that framed our earthly conditions to be insolvable to the human mind in this world. The whole of existence, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual; all our past, present, and future, is so surrounded, penetrated, infused by mystery that, once beyond the physical facts of matter, Nature herself teaching us that certain laws are ever abiding—certain conditions ever recurring—once beyond these, to decide that anything is or is not, can or cannot be, would require almost supernatural powers. Right though it may be for our work in life that we should master our present conditions as completely as we can, we certainly do not succeed in peering through the mystery which surrounds them by such an attempted mastering. The greater knowledge we acquire the more conscious we become that there are still beyond us vast regions we cannot either reach or fathom. And clearly it is not a case of the degree of knowledge which research in science and philosophy can discover to us—it is that on all sides there comes a point where the veil of mystery is drawn. We may find out how the

machinery of all organic life is worked, but that vital spark of life, whether it be in tree or insect, animal or man, without which the machinery can never be started, no Darwin, Huxley, or any other great scientist, could ever explain, or, if once extinguished, could ever re-illumine. And surely the mystery which surrounds the experience of human thought and feeling is quite as difficult to unravel as are those mysteries of the physical world. That there exists an unexplainable power which enables enormous trees to grow out of tiny seeds or any other of the countless analogous physical developments which go on around us continually is, to our mind, no more puzzling than are those experiences of feelings and passions which make up life to any human being who has lived in the full sense of living. When great floods of joy pour into life, giving a fresh meaning to the smallest detail of existence, a keener point to all sensation, a spring and vitality to all the powers, where can we find the creed or science to explain it or to say why such beauty of emotion has come to us? And again—When night is turned on all this sunshine of sensation, and an utter depression of weariness and misery paralyzes all sense of life and hope, is this state less mysterious? We may make the most for good of both conditions, or we may make the most for evil; but the fact remains the same—we have not been the active power, and Job's words, now as ever, best express what has happened—"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away." Those who refuse direct communion with a higher spirit doubtless cannot add the blessing on the power that smites, but even those surely cannot deny the fact that it is a power outside themselves that has

given and has taken away. That any human being can take upon himself to explain such blessings and such miseries by saying that they were *deserved* is a pretension which cannot be admitted either by the heart or the intellect of any nature in which there is any smallest element of humility. Vivid joys and vivid sorrows come to vivid natures; but realizing that this is a fact does not explain it. Such conditions make up the sum of life to those who experience them, and there are few who do not in a greater or lesser degree.

That this is a world entirely made up of sorrow, though the presumed creed of some, is a view that cannot surely be held by any who have ordinary perceptions or wide sympathies with their fellow-creatures, however much sorrow may predominate in such an individual's own life. Physical causes have probably most to do with life being cheerful to many. Some happy natures in prosperous circumstances are endowed with high spirits, an animal vitality, an elasticity which renders living an enjoyment as living; and though such natures may not be insensible to the pain around them, the pleasure of alleviating it, or the power of forgetting it, makes sorrow, though a recognized, not an experienced reality. But to the generality of mankind the day comes sooner or later when "the iron enters into the soul"—when the nature left to itself can find no resting-place but in intolerable misery. Then surely in Nature herself is the instinct to fly for aid to what no will or intention of our own can procure for us. When the answer is given to that cry of the soul, "When my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the Rock that is higher than I," it is as much a fact as is the

feeling of misery which has overwhelmed the heart. Who that has passed through the agony which death or separation, or such changes ~~which~~ *as* can be worse than either, who that has further experienced that such agony can only be alleviated by an influence outside ourselves, ~~and~~ has not also felt how cruelly unreasonable is any creed which would discourage human nature from seeking the only help that can be effectual.⁷ Mr. Balfour writes, in eloquent words, speaking of the necessity of a hope in another world if we are to have hopeful courage to live in this—“The sense of misery unrelieved, of wrong unredressed, of griefs beyond remedy, of failure without hope, of physical pain so acute that it seems the one overmastering reality in a world of shadows, of mental depression so deadly that it welcomes physical pain itself as a relief—these, and all the crookednesses and injustices of a crooked and unjust world, may well overload our spirits and shatter the springs of our energies, if to this world only we must restrict our gaze. For thus restricted the problem is hopeless.” But surely even the most fervent belief in the most blessed future cannot alleviate the present evil of such conditions as those Mr. Balfour describes. It may undoubtedly kindle a hope and an aim which shall not be a selfish anticipation of personal gratification only, but a hope and an aim which shall enable us to feel contentment and resignation in the conditions allotted to us, and shall inspire us to use all our faculties and powers to the utmost for the commonweal. But when our faculties are crushed by physical or mental misery, no hope or thought of future joys will revive them. It is present help, “a very present help in time of

trouble," we want—it is the faith which shall kindle the spirit—it is the acknowledged lever of all spiritual religions ever taught, that belief in the power of a higher spirit to descend as faith ascends to meet it, which there and then can help the sufferer—that kindling of the spirit which once enjoyed becomes of all blessings the greatest blessing, once realized becomes of all certainties the greatest certainty.

And yet, though thousands of generations of teachers have taught the efficacy of such spiritual communion, with all the refinements and culture of modern intellectual life, and supersensitiveness to pleasure and pain developed by such culture, the one road out of despair is given up by many as a childish solution which it is unworthy of the human reason to follow. Has the human intellect advanced to very much more intelligent fields of experience and thought than those traversed by the mind of Bacon, who wrote the "Student's Prayer," ending with the words, "This also we humbly and earnestly beg, that human things may not prejudice such as are divine ; neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, anything of incredulity or *intellectual night*, may arise in our minds towards divine mysteries? But rather that, by our mind thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject and perfectly given up to divine oracles, there may be given unto faith the things that are faith's." And again, in the writer's prayer, "Thou, O Father, who gavest the visible light as the first-born of Thy creatures, and didst pour into man the intellectual light as the top and consummation of Thy workmanship, be pleased to protect and

govern this work which coming from Thy goodness returneth to Thy glory." Here we meet with that intellectual completeness which we find so wanting in the views of the Positivists, and which, we think, even leaving out of count the supreme value of religious emotion, places the reasoning on a different and on a higher level to that of any which does not acknowledge the supremacy of the spirit over the intellect. It acknowledges the relative position and importance of matter, intellect, and spirit. Great intellects do their work in life by purifying the physical nature of its lower tendencies, but the greatest surely have always acknowledged an agency more powerful than mind which inspires the intellect to do its best. The experience in past and present history, independent of all creeds, teaches us that the intellect has seldom succeeded in keeping the lower part of man's nature in right order, if the intellect has not been kept rightly balanced by the higher spirit. And surely no effort of the mind alone can ever produce that balance and place the spirit as supreme; it is alone communion with what is of the spirit's own kind, but which has the power to direct and inspire the whole nature of man.

Belief in the efficacy of direct communion with the spirit, independent of any intellectual reasoning, appears to be more difficult when civilization becomes as complex as it is now. The moral element is developed more naturally, it seems, in a time like our own; it links itself more harmoniously with the kind of intellectual activity which is the chief feature of our present teaching. In the aims of our modern life, energy and movement have assumed, we feel, an

unnecessary predominance over the qualities that calm, strengthen, and sustain life. It seems as if not only the flesh but the intellect was now warring against the spirit. We have all hailed that expression "sweetness and light," created for us by our great school-examiner poet, as so comprehensively expressing our wants ; and doubtless we are striving hard for intellectual light. But where is the sweetness? Is it a feature in the category of school board aims, or to be found in the spirit of the teaching of crammers for competitive examinations? In the everlasting striving to remember facts, to understand and explain phenomena, there is little scope for the nature to expand towards those perfecting and mellowing influences which cannot in their nature fully be explained or fully be understood, but which belong to the condition of mystery which we call the supernatural.

But is it right to call such influences *supernatural*? If, as we believe, they form the innermost essence of all nature, it is surely misleading to designate them by a word which implies that they are outside and above it. Either we feel God is in the nature of everything, or He is in the nature of nothing. The spirit who has the key to the mysteries we are all living in, the ultimate shrine of all our highest human aspiration, has ordained the nature of all things. Why should we think spiritual apprehensions more supernatural than intellectual conceptions? And further, a difficulty has perhaps been made in that superstition, the great bug-bear of the modern intelligence, has become associated with what is called supernatural. If we only fully realized that the so-

called *supernatural* is the natural, is the very core of Nature herself, then, perhaps, the accusations of vagueness, want of reality, want of power and logic in facing and separating what we actually feel, know, and believe, from those feelings which association and inclination, and perhaps cowardice, make us lean towards indulging in—all those accusations with which the Positivists so often assail what is called supernatural religion might be easily confuted. It might be found easier to disentangle the elements of superstition from those of spiritual experiences in the minds of many who at present are apt to confound them. It is certain that, leaving out of count all the writings of theologians, it is among the highest intellectual natures of the past that we find a record of humblest belief in the power of a Divine agency to help us in our struggles through life. In heathen and Christian alike we find the same childlike attitude of dependence on the Divine will. Endless quotations we might find from the writings of the great intellectual lights of the past, proving it to be no want of power in the mind which causes men to realize that the spirit ought to overtower the intellect, but rather it is, to use Bacon's words, "an intellectual night" which impedes the "modern mind" from giving to "faith the things that are faith's." But this granted, What has caused, in this era of intellectual business, such an "intellectual night?"

Is not perhaps the greatest mystery of all, the fact that to some are given the blessings of direct communion with the Divine Spirit, which alone can lift off a crushing weight of despair, and to others they are denied? Positivists may say that the entertain-

ing of such blessings is living in a fool's paradise. That will not prevent it being a paradise compared to the dreary emptiness of spirit of those who live without such blessings. It is fact, not fiction, that, to use Mr. Balfour's words, such blessings do "offer consolation to those who are in grief, hope to those who are bereaved, strength to the weak, forgiveness to the sinful, rest to those who are weary and heavy-laden." They do "penetrate and vivify the inmost life of ordinary humanity. There is in them nourishment for ordinary human souls, comfort for ordinary human sorrow, help for ordinary human weakness." To those who have experienced them it would be as childish to try and prove that it was all fancy to think the sunshine was bright and cheerful, or that a thick fog was dark and depressing. When the heart was in despair, help came and made that despair bearable. Call that help by whatever name you like, it is a fact, no fiction, to the heart that experienced it.

To many the framework in which the mind of the theologian has incased that spiritual emotion has become obstructive rather than helpful to a spiritual vitality. We know that religion to very many minds, who have even been taught it from infancy, means no individual experience: minds who, nevertheless, on intellectual and practical matters, are thoughtful minds. The form and words of our services, often in themselves so very beautiful, have ceased, partly from reiteration perhaps, to carry with them any inspiring ring which can kindle a spiritual emotion. They associate themselves in the mind to wearisome times in childhood, to restraint, formality, often unreality. Some not unworthy natures feel most strangely irre-

religious the moment family prayers begin or they find themselves at the orthodox eleven o'clock morning service in church. Everything in life seems to have a more stirring, suggestive, moving quality than those only too well known religious exercises. It seems to us that positivism in religion is a phase very analogous to realism in art and literature. It is a resistance against the taking for granted that the mind ought to go in a certain groove. The form in which orthodox teaching generally comes to a youthful and earnest mind fails to inspire that sense of growth and vitality which he finds in intellectual pursuits. So the intellect is given food and the spirit is given none. There is on the one side a formality which deadens the interest, and on the other side a certain forcing a belief in the spiritual mysteries and dogmas of the Church (which comes to a climax in the Athanasian Creed) which creates a resistance in the mind, raises a critical spirit, and ends in opposition and incredulity. A want of harmony, a sense of unreality is felt in all this formal dictating of the subtlest truths and the most spiritual emotions. A form, a process is expected to be gone through before the heart is allowed to unpour its wants and necessities in prayer or its gratitude and love in praise. When Marcus Aurelius wrote the lines, "A prayer of the Athenians—Rain, rain, O dear Zeus, down on the fields of the Athenians and on the plains—In truth we ought not to pray at all, or we ought to pray in this simple and noble fashion," perhaps he may have been wearied out by the obstructiveness to religious emotion which the forms and ceremonies in his religious services created for him. It seems almost impossible to work the

machinery of large civilized communities so as to give religious food at all to the masses, at the same time suiting it to those who, from intellectual gifts and finer sensibilities, nature has separated from the masses.

Still, whatever are the faults of our modern times, we have in our best culture the desire to be real, not to take for granted or pretend to believe anything for form's sake only. Modern life and thought tends to everyone thinking for himself in religion as in other matters. This being the case, we feel we ought to be more than ever careful that prejudice against the old forms and settings of a creed which have ceased to satisfy us as expressing our most earnest thought and most real feelings, does not limit our apprehension of those realities which were the original basis of those forms and settings, and which basis is a belief in the supreme importance of spiritual vitality in life as the reality and the truth most worthy of the human intellect to apprehend, most necessary for the truest welfare of our everyday life. It is doubtless the positivist element in theology which has helped to create the Positivists' creed. It is the dictating of dogmas instead of the encouragement of direct communion with the spirit—the centre of life and of the power of life living. It is still life and more life for which we pant, but we seem to go further and further away from the source of it. We seek it on the wrong lines. No straining of the intellect can ever give us what in its essence the intellect does not contain. Has not orthodoxy ceased to hold its strongest ground? Has it not attempted to use the intellect where the intellect is out of place? Has it not ceased

to rely on its finest weapon and taken up those fit only for its adversaries?

"Except ye be as little children ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" is the verse most often quoted to meet the doubts of scepticism; but by sceptics it is generally disposed of as meaning merely a blind acceptance of the orthodox Church doctrines constructed for the edification of the ignorant by uninspired human beings. It is evident that life may either develop or deaden spiritual vitality—a child may be more or less spiritually active when he grows to be a man. There are experiences in childhood described so perfectly in Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" remarkably analogous to those we find in the poet's mind—both echo a note of Divine inspiration. There is no reason to believe that the being "as little children" means exclusively that quality of simplicity in childhood which accepts unquestioningly the things that are taught it by those more experienced in life. One very distinct characteristic of childhood is the power to seize a truth in a direct and complete way which even subtle logic cannot arrive at. The mind of the child and the poet are alike in apprehending truth, often with an instinctive certainty.

An equally childlike attribute is also that sense of inspiration in happiness, that spontaneity and freshness with which it seizes the things lovable to it—the same quality which some natures endowed with genius retain to the end of their lives. The poet and imaginative artist feel the things they love as keenly and as absorbingly as do children—with that vitality which takes the commonplace element out of every-

thing. With them as with children impressions of beauty have somewhat the quality of miraculous inspirations.

“The earth and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.”¹

Such impressions are seized and absorbed into the nature as the veriest realities of life. But though the poet could not fulfil his mission of transmitting them in a lasting and beautiful form to the outside world, were there not this quality of excess in his emotion, this outside world is in the habit of considering such an attitude of mind as extravagantly wanting in common sense. It is even irritating and exasperating to the class of mind which tries to prop up a safely-poised balance in the affairs of life by mediocrity in all directions. It is true we see those everyday matters which are to the poet's mind vague and meaningless, get at times considerably into a tangle. Everyday matters in a complicated civilization are naturally the difficult things to him. His imagination is not focussed to the form and to the wear and tear of everyday worries. It is absorbed by the passion for truth and beauty, by the delight of feeling an inspiration in them. This surely is something analogous to the state of mind that we are taught by the Sermon on the Mount as that we ought all to attain to. “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”

¹ See Wordsworth's “Ode on Intimations of Immortality.”

But such teaching is difficult indeed to combine with the complicated arrangements of modern life. An *establishment* in *respectable* classes would with difficulty be kept together on those lines! And when we see among all classes the evils which sloth, irregularity, carelessness, and all the other sins against respectability produce, can anyone wonder that the aim in those who teach is to inspire care and forethought for those material things, clothes, food, and shelter, which are the indispensable necessities for every member of a civilized community? Nevertheless, what has been the history of all highly civilized communities? To quote again from Mr. Balfour: "Progress has not been along one line of descent. Races and nations have in turn taken up the burden of advancing civilization, borne it for a certain space, found it too heavy for them, and have laid it wearily down." And is this not chiefly because these civilizations have become submerged under the elaborate complications of intellect and materialism. They have outgrown the things of the spirit; the being as little children has become an impossibility. That freshness and power of keenly feeling nature's simplest emotions, awe, admiration, enthusiasm, has gone. The strength of the spirit has been crushed under the load civilization has put upon it.

Again, children as a rule have very hidden lives, which they follow all by themselves inside the form of their obvious proceedings; and in this, too, the nature of the poet is like that of a grown-up child. Fine instincts and easily-wounded sensibilities early in life discover to the nature whole regions of experience which the outside world can never enter into and

which it shrinks from exposing to the rough treatment of the uninitiated.

"High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised."¹

The outer world has too little knowledge and sympathy in this inner life to make it possible for it to be put into an understandable form to it, so such a poet's nature becomes secretive, shunning the familiarity, even in the nearest relations of life, which takes for granted that there can of necessity be an unfolding of all the crevices of mind and soul. When however a friend enters unconsciously and naturally into those precious regions—a friend who is made so as to want no introduction to them—such ties are found which repeat very much the friendships of children, when playmates have a life together in which the element of secrecy and mystery lends a certain charm. And are not these friendships both analogous somewhat to that "hidden life" which is the experience of many spiritually-minded Christians?

But every day our civilization seems to be forcing us further and further away from the conditions which make possible for our lives to be characterized by those childlike attributes, either by the pure simplicity which in its nature seizes undoubtedly the truest truth, or by that spontaneity and vitality which enjoys it with a satisfying joy, or by that awe which enshrines it sacredly in a hallowed and hidden intimacy.

"Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!"²

¹ See Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

² *Ibid.*

Not only, nor perhaps chiefly, do we want that sustaining, satisfying influence of the spiritual life to cope with the tempests of strong passionate joys and griefs, for these in themselves carry with them the power and excitement of emotion by which we are buoyed up above the dreary level of materialism, it is that—

“Each day brings its petty dust,
Our soon chok'd souls to fill.”¹

And is it not all getting more and more difficult as life gets more and more crowded and hurried—the smaller crushing out the greater as the greater loses itself in mystery—the smaller that can analyze, can explain, can criticise itself, asserting itself, and disposing of the greater because it cannot explain itself? That tender, hidden sensibility which has in it beyond all things the power of suffering cannot assert a creed. Loneliness, profound loneliness is its portion, for in itself this power of suffering is a weakening element in the active life of an everyday world. When we see the inextricable tangle of wrong influences, “all the crookednesses and injustices of a crooked and unjust world”—the triumph of mediocrity—the so-called common sense (how often such common nonsense!) over-riding a finer, truer, completer sense; the great, and simple, and real degraded under the prejudices, vanity, and tenacious obstinacy of small minds and blunt sensibilities; the miserable small envies and jealousies eating away all beauty from life; the sense of what is due to the *ego* mounting a camel and calling itself principle! And worst of all, the up-side-downedness of the well-intentioned, is not all that seems best

¹ See Matthew Arnold's poem entitled “Absence.”

in life wellnigh disheartened? Do we not feel that somehow or other our civilization has blunted our truest sense, while it has complicated our lives? The fine edge of true distinction has been rubbed off, we no longer gauge the all-important and the unimportant as they should be gauged, and a torrent of active efficiency has swept away the delicate fibres that could have rooted in us a simple spiritual faith. We are left in the torrent, and all the "injustices and crookednesses" assume such an absorbing and crushing prominence, where there is no calming centre to sustain us and to rest in, no larger, purer atmosphere in which the wounds of life can be healed.

Those of us who feel most the want of it, in the yearning for a help from outside to meet our spiritual longings, do we not more and more seek, as our fittest Church, the spots where wild Nature has had her way; the lonely large spaces of sky, sea, and earth, left undisturbed by any human arrangement for making her beautiful? Do we not find quite a moral worth in that poetry of place? Why again do those spots where the life of the poetic spirit has taken form, retain an atmosphere of charm which is almost sacred? However shabby and plain are the surroundings of a great worker, a creative genius, do they not echo something which the most beautiful elegancies are dumb to suggest? Indeed, the plainer the aspect of the outer life is kept, the more saliently does the poetic spirit shine out of it—we feel the spirit asserts better a right predominance over the slighter elements of life when there is simplicity in its visible surroundings. Why is it felt to be a sacrilege when some lovely spot is wrenched from the atmosphere of solitude and poetry

in which nature has steeped it? It is because whatever place holds that quickening power of kindling spiritual vitality, that is the place that must be ever the most sacred to us, that is the Church in which all the more worldly side of our nature bows down in reverence before the higher mysteries of the spirit. There is such a difficulty in realizing the sense of a great and beneficent being in crowded cities, all vitality in the spirit seems to be ingulfed in the form of life or smothered out of it by the all-importance of material necessities. The dull encumbrances of the rich, the dirty squalor of the poor, all tend to that melancholy which is the characteristic of the modern mind when it is serious and sensitive.

But be this as it may—even if our civilization is on the wane, toppling over its own eminence through luxury and the vices of civilization—it is ours nevertheless. Even

“Though care dulls grace, and wisdom be too proud
To halve a lodging that was all her own :”¹

our civilization, such as it is, makes the conditions we have to work in. The present is the only time that belongs to us. Surely now that we all so fully recognize that food for the intellect is necessary for all classes as well as food for the body, we should also recognize how important it is that such food should have in it every element of right nourishment. But how, indeed, we may well ask, are we to educate that sense which responds to the inner, deeper meaning of things—that sense which the earnest religious teach-

¹ See Matthew Arnold's poem "To a Gipsy Child by the Sea Shore."

ing of centuries of the past and present fails to impress upon the "modern mind?" How to counteract the influences which over-pressure and haste in life are increasing the power of every day? How to elevate and enlarge the standard in education till it shall embrace and develop all the latent capacities of human nature, spiritual as well as mental? We fear not before the moral aim of the present educational ideal is completely changed—not till ambition and a desire beyond all things to *get on* in the eye of the world are exchanged for an aim tending towards true wisdom and contentment. Not only surely should each individual be taught to think for himself, but also be taught to feel for himself. The spirit as well as the mind should be encouraged to have a vital independent life of its own. As each individual is alone the witness of the power of the spirit in his own nature, so the teaching which begins and ends by massing and formalizing human beings into classes can never tend to the awakening of an individual spiritual vitality. A tendency to Agnosticism—moreover to that most illogical of positions, dogmatic Agnosticism—must, we believe, be the result of such teaching. Nothing is certain or provable, and nothing is to be believed in but what is provable. But provable to what? Spiritual experiences cannot be proved by the intellect because they are outside the working of it. They belong to that unfinished side in human nature which is for ever yearning—for ever unsatisfied—if not content to rest quiescently in acknowledging that mystery is a law of our earthly conditions. We can so inadequately explain the nature of our human emotions, and yet we cannot help being very certain that we have ex-

perienced them! Some of us likewise are none the less certain of having experienced spiritual emotions—why should we expect to understand the nature of these more completely? Every high and every strong feeling in humanity has that unfinished, incomprehensible element in it; our tenderest, strongest affections, our noblest ambitions and aspirations. Even when we feel them most keenly, do we know all about them? Is love less of mystery than death? Is it not the suggestion of that mystery of the spirit which gives to human creations a touch almost of the Divine, a touch which kindles our real enthusiasm and our deepest interest? When, for instance, we feel the greatness of the work of that giant artist spirit, Michael Angelo, is it not as much or more for what he has started in our own minds by an unfinished suggestiveness as for the beauty he has actually put materially before our eyes? And in Michael Angelo's own description of his love (more justly to be described perhaps as the idealization of friendship), does he not himself realize that the strength of his affection belongs to other than human conditions merely—

“Souls burn for souls, spirits to spirits cry :
 I seek the splendour in thy fair face storèd ;
 Yet living man that beauty scarce can learn,
 And he who fain would find it first must die ?”¹

¹ Translation by J. A. Symonds of the Sonnet—

“Tu sa' ch' i' so, signior mie, che tu sai
 Ch' i' venni per goderti più da presso ;
 E sai ch' i' so, che tu sa' ch' i' son desso
 A che più indugio a salutarci omai ?
 Se vero è la speranza che mi dàì,
 Se vero è'l buon desio che m'è concesso,

Once these conditions of incompleteness and mystery accepted, cannot we rest in peace, in "that peace which passeth all understanding?" Cannot we find a satisfying contentment in those intimations which are all that are vouchsafed to us? Fully to realize that these are the only true lights which nature intends us to have in this world, humbly to accept them as such, surely such an attitude would help to strengthen and calm us in the struggles of life, would help to inspire a hope which might lift off some of the dreary weight of melancholy with which materialism and a futile worrying of the intellect tortures us—would enable our much exercised intellects to "Give unto faith the things which are faith's," and land us where—

"Hence, in a season of calm weather,
 Though inland far we be,
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."¹

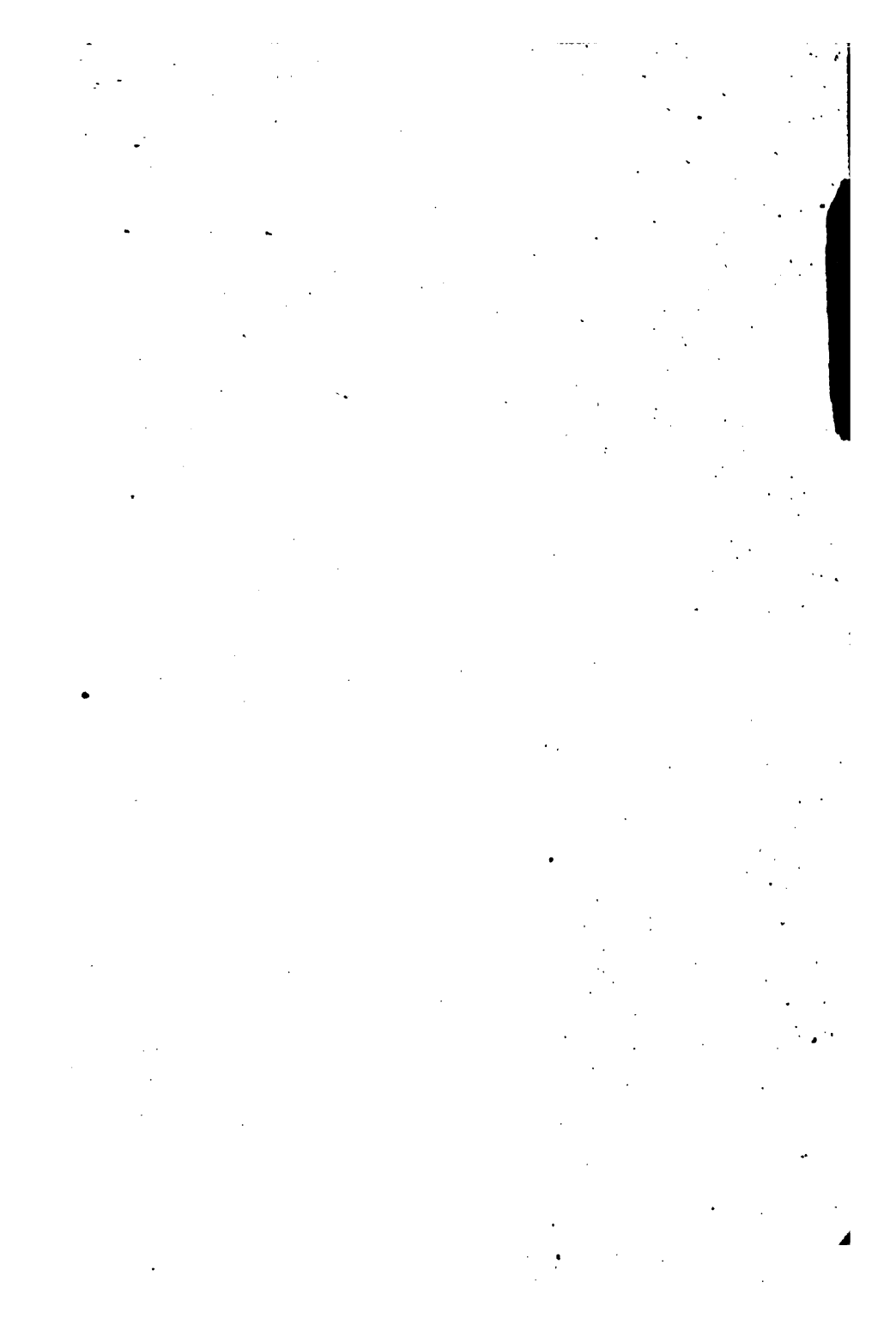
Rompasi il mur frall 'uno e l'altra messo ;
 Chè doppia forza hann'i celati guai.
 S' i' amo sol di te più ami, non ti sdegni ;
 Che l'un dell'altro spirito s'innamora.
 Quel che nel tuo bel volto bramo e'mparo
 E mal compres' è dagli umani ingegni,
 Chi'l vuol veder, convie che prima mora." *n/*

¹ See Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."



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